

Commentary

November 2001

The Danger Within: Militant Islam in America

Daniel Pipes

What Israel Must Now Do to Survive

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Public-Private Partnerships Are Key to Fighting Disease

By Joseph A. Cook, M.D.

Public-private partnerships involving governments, foundations, private companies, and non-governmental organizations have proven to be valuable allies in fighting the infectious diseases and epidemics that ravage the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities. Pharmaceutical companies have been prominent in these efforts, donating medicines and other resources to fight malaria, tuberculosis, and opportunistic infections associated with AIDS. Although debate continues about the appropriate organization and scope of the fight against infectious disease, consensus prevails on one key point: drugs alone are insufficient in the absence of strengthened healthcare systems and changes in health behaviors.

The International Trachoma Initiative (ITI) was among the first public-private partnerships to link prevention with treatment in developing countries, while building the infrastructure necessary for sustained improvement in public health. Founded by Pfizer Inc and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, ITI works toward the elimination of trachoma, the world's leading cause of preventable blindness. In addition to its programming for applied research and communications, ITI supports national efforts to eliminate trachoma through implementation of the "SAFE" strategy (Surgery, Antibiotics, Facial hygiene, Environmental change) recommended by the World Health Organization.

Trachoma has left some six million people throughout the world either blind or visually impaired, and 150 million people infected and in need of treatment. Another 540 million people – almost 10 percent of the world's population – are at risk of contracting the disease. Like many infectious diseases, trachoma disproportionately affects the poor, and it blinds women two to three times more often than men. The burden of trachoma

falls most heavily on countries whose people lack basic access to water, healthcare, and education.

Public-private partnerships have proven to be valuable allies in fighting the infectious diseases that ravage the world's poorest communities

Based on fifteen years of research supported by the Clark Foundation, the SAFE strategy addresses the medical, behavioral, and environmental requisites for eliminating trachoma. Because SAFE is a broad-ranging strategy that involves community development, health promotion, and curative medicine, it requires partnership across sectors. Yet because of its technical simplicity, trachoma control can be integrated with other community-based health and development efforts.

Established in 1998, ITI collaborates with a network of partners to implement the SAFE strategy at the community level in a number of countries where trachoma is endemic. These programs have already shown promising results. In Morocco and Tanzania, for instance, severe trachoma infection has fallen by half in children. Overall, more than 10,000 individuals have received sight-preserving surgery; 2.5 million have received treatment with the powerful antibiotic Zithromax* (*azithromycin*); and an estimated 20 million have received health education in personal and community hygiene.

The identification of Zithromax as an effective agent in fighting trachoma, along with Pfizer's donation of it for use against trachoma in developing countries, represented major advances in the SAFE strategy. A single oral dose of Zithromax can replace six weeks of tetracycline ointment, applied twice daily. Pfizer's involvement in ITI represents one of the first philanthropic pharmaceutical

efforts to include a preventive component, including support of a public health strategy that can ultimately eliminate a disease.

ITI's early success reflects the importance of partnership among private companies, international agencies, and governmental and non-governmental organizations in deploying SAFE and making measurable progress toward eliminating trachoma. From the beginning, ITI saw the need for competency-based partnerships to address the complex nature of trachoma and the multi-disciplinary action needed to control it.

ITI's experience offers a number of lessons that can strengthen the fight against HIV/AIDS and other threats to economic development and social stability. First, disease-control programs must rest on solid scientific research. Second, programs should be locally organized and respond to local circumstances. Third, treatment should be closely linked with prevention and the development of a strong public health infrastructure. Finally, as demonstrated by the SAFE strategy, the program must fit within the broader context of health and social-sector reform.

One hundred years ago, Robert Koch, the father of modern microbiology, urged the governments and philanthropists of his day to fund sanatoria to treat tuberculosis patients. But he added that these facilities alone could not address the "root of the evil" of TB – the overcrowded living conditions of the poor. As the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* has commented, Koch's warning remains relevant today. Innovative medical treatments alone cannot conquer disease. We must also address factors related to behavior, the environment, and healthcare infrastructure.

Joseph A. Cook, M.D., is the Executive Director of the International Trachoma Initiative, a tax-exempt, charitable organization founded by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and Pfizer Inc to seek the global elimination of blinding trachoma. Additional information about ITI can be found at <http://www.trachoma.org>.

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Letters from Readers

Atrocities?

TO THE EDITOR:

Gabriel Schoenfeld's article, "Bob Kerrey, War Criminal?" [July-August], provides a meticulous, thorough, and even-handed analysis of the allegations against a distinguished Vietnam veteran in connection with the shooting of a group of unarmed villagers during the course of a Navy SEAL operation in early 1969.

But I remain more skeptical of former Senator Kerrey's account of the incident than is Mr. Schoenfeld. Although initially it seemed the sort of tragic mistake that is inevitable in war, as Kerrey attempted to defend himself in press conferences I was troubled by the inconsistency of some of his statements, as well as by other evidence contradicting his account. While I agree with Mr. Schoenfeld that we may never be able to come to a definitive conclusion, I do not believe that credible allegations about American

soldiers who may have deliberately killed unarmed civilians should be set aside, and I endorse Michael Kelly's suggestion (in the *Washington Post*) that some sort of official probe be conducted.

I do so for the same reason that I favor convening an international war-crimes tribunal to indict Russian political leaders and military commanders who pursued a deliberate policy of ethnic cleansing, systematic torture, and massacre in Chechnya. As Mr. Schoenfeld convincingly shows, the incidence of this sort of behavior among American troops in Vietnam was remarkably low. All the more reason, then, to hold accountable those who may have engaged in such activities.

MARK KRAMER
*Director, Harvard Project on
Cold War Studies
Cambridge, Massachusetts*

TO THE EDITOR:

In a footnote to "Bob Kerrey, War Criminal?," Gabriel Schoenfeld criti-

cizes Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars*. In discussing World War II, Walzer calls the Allied bombing of Dresden, the flames of which were visible 60 miles away, "savage." Estimates of the casualties vary, but all agree that the loss of life was enormous.

According to Mr. Schoenfeld, however, the bombardment of cities shortened the war. Besides, he says, to abstain from bombing and thereby forfeit the lives of Allied soldiers and the victims of Nazism would have been horrendous.

Mr. Schoenfeld seems to be arguing that the end justifies the means—in 2001, no less. He is, of course, correct that the war effort was aided by the bombing of transportation and industry; but those were legitimate targets. By contrast, saturation bombing with incendiary devices of residential block after residential block, effectively cremating thousands of innocent non-combatants, defies justification.

Walzer has it right: "The deliberate slaughter of innocent men and women cannot be justified simply because it saves the lives of other men and women."

KARL J. WILHELM
Ridgewood, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

The Vietnam war—a good and just cause? With three million dead Vietnamese? I visited Dachau in 1970 shortly after I returned from my tour in Vietnam as an army medic. I then made the correlation between these two genocidal atrocities. Why can't Gabriel Schoenfeld?

JIM GIBSON
Crestline, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Gabriel Schoenfeld is rightly skeptical of several aspects of the story told by Gregory L. Vistica in the *New York Times Magazine*. In February 1969, according to that story, a unit of Navy SEALs led by a young Bob Kerrey loosed 1,200

rounds of ammunition at a group of Vietnamese civilians in the hamlet of Thanh Phong in the Mekong Delta. Kerrey himself has acknowledged the incident, but has said that the shooting took place from a distance, in response to enemy fire, and was directed at what he thought were Vietcong guerrillas, only later discovering otherwise. But one member of his unit, Gerhard Klann, reported that the shooting was, on the contrary, a deliberate act, committed at close range against unarmed villagers and intended to facilitate the escape of the SEALs from the area.

Klann's story is indeed riveting: seven SEALs sneak into a village on a dark night 32 years ago and, finding no enemy, round up all the villagers, form a firing squad, and execute them. The only problem is that what he describes is impossible.

Like Bob Kerrey, I was a SEAL patrol leader in Vietnam, and I made three back-to-back tours in the Mekong Delta. Kerrey's platoon came to Vietnam and relieved mine at the end of 1968; the Thanh Phong raid happened a month after I left.

Thanh Phong lay in the Thanh Phu Secret Zone, one of the most dangerous Vietcong strongholds in the Mekong Delta. On the night of Kerrey's raid, the SEALs were going after an important Vietcong official who, according to intelligence reports, was to meet with a military commander in the village. As the SEALs would have known, Vietcong officials routinely kept a team of soldiers for protection, and military commanders always traveled with a security element. The SEALs,

by contrast, were without the usual cover of nearby helicopter gunships and were out of artillery range; this was an unusually treacherous mission. Total lack of support made them completely reliant on stealth, the element of surprise, and their own ammunition. If anything went wrong, the Vietcong could easily encircle them or cut off their withdrawal. Klann himself made this point to Dan Rather on *60 Minutes* when he said that the chances of getting out alive, if the SEALs' mission was compromised, were "slim to none."

Now picture again the scene according to Klann. Seven men, deep in an enemy stronghold, with no hope of support or of rescue if their luck were to turn bad, make their way into a village. There, they find no Vietcong. So, with the civilian inhabitants huddled in front of them and all seven SEALs grouped on one side with their backs to the jungle, on Bob Kerrey's order. . . .

Stop right there. This is the moment that could not have happened.

I crept into too many Thanh Phongs on too many terrifying, dark nights not to know what those seven SEALs were thinking as they entered the village. *Where were the Vietcong?* Were they in the tree line, watching, ready to come swarming down? Were they waiting on the trail leading out? Did they have B-40 rockets? A mortar? Was the whole thing a trap? A thousand such thoughts were possible; "nobody is home, let's start shooting" would not have been one of them.

The SEALs had a standard operating procedure

for missions like this one. Upon entering a site like Thanh Phong, five of the seven would fan out, taking defensive positions preassigned in the day's briefing. Each man would crouch in the shadows, pointing his weapon toward an approach to the village, providing protection for the two SEALs assigned to search for weapons, documents, prisoners, or anything of intelligence value. If the enemy came swarming out of the jungle, the five were ready to return fire instantly and cover the team's withdrawal.

To buy Klann's story you have to imagine, instead, all seven SEALs forgetting about their unseen enemy, turning their backs to the dangers lurking in the spooky tree line, and clustering up in front of a bunch of civilians. Clustering up? Sorry: every SEAL would know that a single grenade, rocket, or well-aimed burst from the tree line could wipe out the squad.

What happened next, in Klann's version, makes even less sense: seven SEALs blasting away 1,200 precious rounds to execute fifteen villagers. Ammunition was practically the SEALs' only currency of survival, and all they had among them, as we know from the after-action report routinely filed following every mission, was 2,400 rounds. The weapons carried by SEALs were capable of firing 1,000 rounds per minute; in a fierce firefight, all 2,400 rounds could be shot in less than a minute. To get home alive, the SEALs husbanded their ammunition carefully.

Klann says they executed the villagers in order to keep them from alerting the Vietcong to the SEALs'

presence. Figure *that* one out. If relative noiselessness was the objective, the SEALs could have ordered the civilians back into the bunker from which they had emerged and dropped a grenade down the hatch. Atrocity? Yes, but one muffled "whump" and the SEALs would be on their way with their ammo intact. The Vietcong would have thought it was a villager fishing with explosives, or an animal stumbling into a booby trap. Alternatively, Klann himself, who had the machine gun, could have accomplished the atrocity he describes with one short burst.

Until the firing, the SEALs had the precious element of surprise. Once they cranked off 1,200 rounds on that deathly-still night, every Vietcong within five miles would have known they were there. Worse, they would have expended half their precious ammunition and might still have had to fight their way back to the river. There was no way a SEAL would pull a trigger in such a situation, unless it were to initiate an assault or, as Kerrey asserted, to return enemy fire.

Finally, Klann claims the squad shot the civilians on Kerrey's order. Nobody seems to have asked Klann how the order was given, but in a situation like Thanh Phong an impromptu change of plans was next to impossible. It was not simply a matter of calling out in the dark, "Hey, guys, come in off your positions. There has been a change of plans and I need your massive firepower to kill these unarmed civilians." Indeed, with five of the SEALs spread out in defensive positions, I cannot imagine

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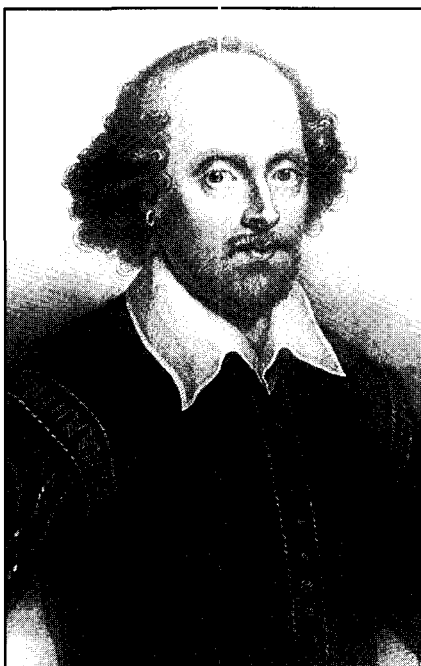
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PETER SACCIO (Ph.D., Princeton University) is Leon D. Black Professor of Shakespearean Studies at Dartmouth College, where he has taught since 1966. He has won Dartmouth's J. Kenneth Huntington Memorial Award for Outstanding Teaching. His author of *Shakespeare's English Kings* (1977), a recognized classic in its field. Professor Saccio is also a trained actor. He has performed the Shakespearean roles of Casca, Angelo, Bassanio, and Henry IV, and has directed productions of *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth*, and *Cymbeline*.

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how a patrol leader would have effected such a maneuver even had he wanted to. Knowing the men in Kerrey's squad as I do, I also find it impossible to believe any would have *complied* with such a patently illegal and tactically preposterous order.

There is an illusion that the Thanh Phong story has now been "covered" by the media. In fact the media covered only the edited words of Gerhard Klann, fed through Gregory Vistica and Dan Rather together with their own assurances that Klann was a credible witness. But then, surprisingly, Klann vanished and refused calls. When his teammates stepped forward and gently suggested his memories were in error, and when Bob Kerrey subjected himself to full and very painful examination, Klann's story started to look thin.

At that point, reporters scurried to Vietnam. There, under the stern eyes of Hanoi officials, they held interviews with ex-Vietcong who, predictably, agreed with what Hanoi had already permitted to be said in its government-controlled press, which had publicly convicted Bob Kerrey long ago. No matter: the *Washington Post* headlined its story, "Villagers Dispute Kerrey's Account," as if the "villagers" in question were so many Iowa farmers; columnist Mary McGrory was duly moved to call for a tribunal.

Over the decades, the reality that was the Vietnam war has been supplanted by myth. Nothing, it seems, can be allowed to dispel that myth—not even, or especially, the truth.

GARY PARROTT
Belfair, Washington

GABRIEL SCHOENFELD writes:

Mark Kramer favors an official inquiry into Bob Kerrey's conduct in Vietnam. I oppose one, for the reasons that I set out in my article. My differences with Mr. Kramer on this point do not rest on any deep principle; I simply do not see any good or much truth emerging from such an inquiry at this late date. For a very different set of reasons, I also do not favor, as he does, convening an international tribunal to try Russia's political and military leaders—our current close allies in the war on terrorism—for their undeniably brutal conduct in their own war against Chechen separatism and terrorism (and the forces of Osama bin Laden), but that is a subject for another day.

Karl J. Wilhelm takes up the question of the morality of the Allied bombing of Dresden. He agrees with me that aerial attacks on German transportation and industry aided the war efforts and even concedes that these were "legitimate targets," but is vociferously opposed to the bombing of German cities. What he fails to acknowledge is that at no point in World War II did the Allies have smart bombs, or anything close to them in accuracy.

Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett go over this ground in their indispensable *A War to Be Won*. In December 1940, when the Royal Air Force attacked an oil refinery at Gelsenkirchen in one of its early raids, the flight crews thought they had hit it hard. In fact, photo reconnaissance shortly revealed that not a single one of the 262 tons of bombs dropped actually fell on the

refinery. To destroy industrial facilities and the like, it quickly became apparent to the British that they could not aim at individual targets but only at regions where such targets were concentrated: namely, cities.

In the end, it was bombing attacks against cities that made a major contribution to shortening and ending Nazi rule. Even Michael Walzer agrees that, for a time, the bombing of German cities was, in his word, a "necessity." In fighting a foe as evil as Hitler, he writes,

the more certain a German victory appeared to be in the absence of a bomber offensive, the more justifiable was the decision to launch the offensive. Here was a supreme emergency, where one might well be required to override the rights of innocent people and shatter the war convention.

The bombing of Dresden in mid-February 1945 is, of course, a special case, not solely because it was such an exquisite city but primarily because the attack on it came so late in the war—when, it can be plausibly argued, the "supreme emergency" was over and the bombing of German urban centers was gratuitous. But Allied planners did not, at that moment, see things quite the same way Michael Walzer does, looking back contemplatively across several decades. They saw a Germany that, though faltering, was still fiercely resisting, and that only weeks earlier, in mid-December 1944, had caught them by surprise by launching an offensive in the Ardennes (the Battle of the Bulge) that cost

the United States 81,000 casualties, including 19,000 deaths. They had to worry about other surprises, including the possibility of some new "wonder weapon" like the A-bomb or an old one like poison gas, that might suddenly turn the tide of battle or inflict grievous harm on Allied troops or cities.

It is in this context that the bombing of Dresden must be judged. With the clarity of hindsight, it may have been unnecessary and therefore wrong; but the decision does not, as Karl J. Wilhelm would have it, defy justification.

Jim Gibson cites the overall casualty figure for Vietnam and posits a correlation between Dachau, which he visited in 1970, and Vietnam, where he served. He does not tell us what he saw (or did?) in Vietnam that matched what he saw at the memorial site at Dachau, so I am somewhat at a loss in arguing with him. But from my own knowledge of Vietnam, my impression is that, if anything, it was Communist concentration camps that bore more than a passing resemblance to the Nazi punishment camp at Dachau.

However unwisely and ineptly it was fought, the Vietnam war was a "good and just cause" precisely because it aimed to spare the Vietnamese people from such camps and from other cruel Communist practices. The vast flow of refugees, many of whom risked or forfeited their lives to get away after the fall of South Vietnam, is only part of the evidence that I could adduce in support of this claim. I would also point Mr. Gibson (as well as Mark Kramer) to the extraordinary

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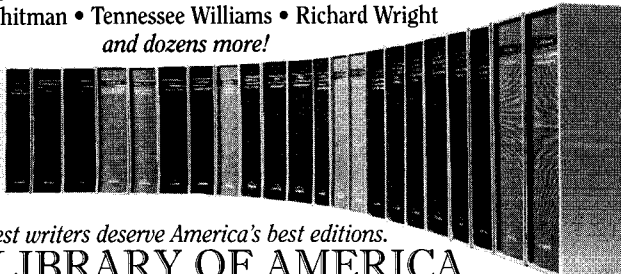
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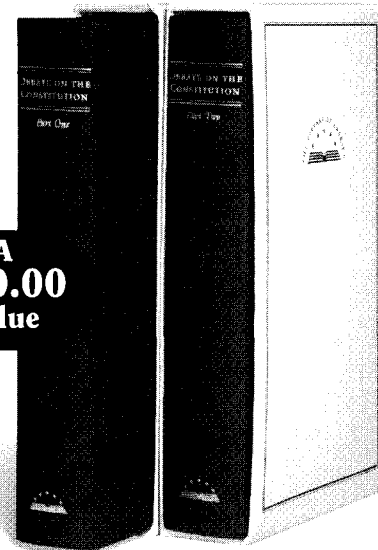
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letter from Gary Parrott, which goes a good distance farther than I was able to in debunking at least one Vietnam atrocity story.

War and Remembrance

TO THE EDITOR:

In her essay, "That These Dead Shall Not Have Died in Vain" [July-August], Midge Decter writes of today's Israelis:

[O]nly recently they had to step back, or rather were pushed back, from the brink of a truly dangerous delusion: that an understanding could be reached with their enemy by taking upon themselves the full weight of guilt for the conflict between them. For as we know, it is the smell of blood that truly rouses the tiger.

The *tiger*? I take it this refers to the Palestinians. The dehumanization here is so complete that Midge Decter refuses even to refer to tigers in the plural—something that might have involved some recognition of the Palestinians' reality as individuals. No, the Palestinians are not even a *bunch* of predatory animals; they are, *en masse*, just one big monster, collectively lusty to devour the Jewish people.

Midge Decter appears unaware of the irony (and obscenity) of dehumanizing the Palestinians while discussing the history of American slavery. She also appears unaware of her own double standards. The Confederates, she tells us, were "brave" men despite the wickedness of their cause and the blood they shed for it; their reluctant surrender in 1865 evokes her "sorrow."

The Palestinians, by contrast, are subhuman predators because they happen to stand in the way of their own expropriation. There is, apparently, nothing at all to be said for them: they represent life without value, to be wiped off the face of the earth.

Though this may come as a surprise to Midge Decter, the Palestinians are in fact full-fledged human beings and moral agents. I know how hard this is to remember, given their current existence in the moral equivalent of a human zoo, but learned allusions to Jefferson, Lincoln, and Grant would sound less hypocritical if the effort were made.

IRFAN KHAWAJA
Princeton, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

How could anyone not be moved by Midge Decter's beautifully written piece? But I must quibble just a bit. Using 21st-century moral hindsight to judge the minds of 19th-century Southerners does not always contribute to understanding the complex social and political currents of a bygone era.

Consider, for example, Abraham Lincoln's words in his debate with Stephen Douglas in 1858:

I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races. I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people. . . . There is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality.

A politically expedient speech in southern Illinois; but can Lincoln have known that this is what we would now call racism?

Or consider the military order issued by General Grant on December 17, 1862:

The Jews as a class, violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department . . . are hereby expelled from the Department of Tennessee [which included parts of Tennessee, Mississippi, and Kentucky] within 24 hours from the receipt of this order.

Can Grant have known that this would today be deemed blatantly anti-Semitic, including by the Israelis gathered at the Scout ceremony described so finely in "That These Dead Shall Not Have Died in Vain"?

CHARLES ZIMMERMAN
Annapolis, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR:

Midge Decter brilliantly expresses feelings I, too, had upon spending some time in Israel this past May. Her description of the Israeli scouts' memorial ceremony brought to mind an exhibit I saw in the Knesset building in Jerusalem, where a large screen successively flashes the faces of soldiers killed each month in Israel's wars. Almost all were cut down in their late teens or twenties.

As Midge Decter rightly observes, the apparent willingness of some politicians and intellectuals to "barter away their brother in order to placate their enemies" is more than deplorable in the present context. Ultimately, such mistaken logic could lead to the abandonment of Israel itself in the name of an illusory peace.

When one sees today's young men and women, black and white, serving together in the Israel Defense Forces, there still seems reason for optimism. Israel's survival may well require no less determination, perseverance, courage, and faith than were shown by Lincoln and Grant 150 years ago. But are these not the qualities Israel has always needed?

NORMAN FRIEDMAN
Boca Raton, Florida

MIDGE DECTER writes:

Irfan Khawaja seems not to be acquainted with English idiom. I was not calling Palestinians "tigers" or "animals" but rather summoning an image very commonly employed in alluding to the consequences of showing weakness—especially when one is negotiating with someone who is, shall we say, less than friendly. Barak appeared to be showing weakness to Arafat when he offered him more than Israel could safely live without, and for this appearance ("appearance" because Barak might in fact have been calling Arafat's bluff) he received very convincing evidence that the Palestinian Authority will not cease from terror until Palestine reaches from the Jordan to the sea. In this, the Palestinians are all too human—and it is well past time for Israelis to stop kidding themselves and recognize that fact.

As Charles Zimmerman suggests, slavery has been an issue in the hearts and minds of Americans since the country's founding—how could it not have been? The slaveholders were intent—as it turned out, unto death—upon maintaining two things that for them seemed indistinguishable: the principle of states' rights and the basic organization of their slavery—

dependent economy. It is most doubtful, however, that in the hours after midnight, down at the bottom of consciousness, they succeeded in blinding themselves to the humanity of the people they had reduced to chattel.

As for Abraham Lincoln, he was a politician with his eye on the presidency: he was not about to contribute to the break-up of the country. Union came first, and he was prepared to preside over what would become the bloodiest war in the country's history to preserve that union. But is there any doubt about how he felt about slavery? Lincoln's war was a horror, but it kept us together, and in the long run made possible a full national life in common.

As for Grant and the Jews,

that is a historical sadness of a different, happily no longer so familiar, kind.

Finally, I thank Norman Friedman for his kind words. The Israelis have certainly not been Lincoln and Grant, but considering the conditions under which they have had to sustain themselves from virtually the first moment on, first in their homeland and then in their state, one would have to conclude that they have not done so badly. It is unfair to ask more of them. And yet, of course, that is precisely what history is doing.

Global Warming

TO THE EDITOR:

In his article "Too Darn Hot?" [June], Kevin A. Shapiro, a researcher in neuroscience, assures us that the

majority opinion among climatologists with regard to the greenhouse effect is, at the least, overly alarmist. May we assume that, should an issue in neuroscience arise with major public-policy consequences, COMMENTARY will publish a climatologist explaining to us why the majority of neuroscientists are wrong?

Readers with access to an Internet search engine might type in the words "polar ice cap" and "melting" and see what comes up. They will find numerous references to thinning polar ice, decreasing salinity (a consequence of increased rates of melting), and softening permafrost. The *Washington Post* recently carried a front-page story to the effect that in the last three decades, Peru has lost

almost one-fourth of its former 1,225 square miles of Andean glaciers due to atmospheric warming.

I understand that from the perspective of political conservatives, it is nice to think the greenhouse effect can be disregarded; doing so obviates the need for controls, regulations, and taxes of various sorts. But adopting a scientific stance because of political imperatives is no way to get at the truth.

JOHN M. LEVY
Blacksburg, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR:

Kevin Shapiro makes a small but crucial technical error when he writes:

Increases in the industrial emission of gases like carbon dioxide (CO₂), it is



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said, have caused the atmosphere to absorb infrared radiation that would otherwise be reflected back into outer space. The resulting "greenhouse effect" lifts the average temperature of the earth's surface.

The word "reflected" means the same radiation that came in goes back out. This is not what is happening in the greenhouse effect.

The sun bathes the earth in radiation. A fraction (37 percent) of this radiation is reflected straight back into space. But most of it (the other 63 percent) is absorbed by the earth and then reradiated, from both its dayside and nightside, back into space. In this way, apart from diurnal and seasonal variations, the earth's surface maintains a roughly constant temperature. But because the earth is much, much cooler than the sun, the radiation it sends back into space is at infrared wavelengths, while the radiation it receives from the sun is at the much shorter wavelengths of visible light.

A greenhouse gas is one, like carbon dioxide (CO₂), that is composed of three or more atoms and is transparent to visible light but opaque to infrared radiation. By contrast, gases whose molecules are composed of two atoms, such as oxygen (O₂) and nitrogen (N₂), are transparent at both visible and infrared wavelengths and so are not greenhouse gases. We now come to the big question: which gas is the major greenhouse gas? It is *not* carbon dioxide. The major greenhouse gas is water vapor (H₂O).

Water vapor, whose presence is determined by natural processes—the balance

between evaporation from the oceans and precipitation—contributes 97 to 99 percent of the total thermal trapping caused by the earth's atmosphere. Carbon dioxide contributes the other 1 to 3 percent. Thus, although the concentration of carbon dioxide over the last 100 years has increased by about 25 percent, the fact that carbon dioxide makes only a minor contribution to the total means that there has been *nothing like* a corresponding increase in the amount of thermal trapping.

In short, the threat of catastrophic man-made global warming is a chimera.

JOCELYN TOMKIN
*University of Texas
Austin, Texas*

TO THE EDITOR:

Howls of protest from predictable quarters greeted President Bush's decision to walk away from the Kyoto Protocol. Yet the uproar cannot obscure how weak the case of the treaty's supporters really is.

As Kevin Shapiro correctly points out, the Kyoto Protocol stood no chance of ever being ratified by the U.S. Senate. Nor has a single member of the European Union ratified the treaty, even though the EU as a whole emits more greenhouse gases than the U.S. European governments may say they want to "shame" Washington into returning to the Kyoto fold, but the treaty was already dead, and Bush wisely decided to bury it.

In the U.S., Bush's decision met with expressions of outrage by environmentalists, political commentators, and politicians like Senators Joseph Lieberman and John Kerry. The move coincided with the administration's withdrawing of a

last-minute Clinton proposal to tighten the standard for arsenic in drinking water, which only increased the environmentalists' ire. Yet in the wake of both decisions, the President's approval ratings stood at over 60 percent, an astonishing level given his narrow margin of victory in last November's disputed election. What this tells us is that the environmentalists' bark is far worse than the political staying power of their bite.

BONNER R. COHEN
*Lexington Institute
Arlington, Virginia*

KEVIN A. SHAPIRO writes:

Contrary to John M. Levy's suggestion, science is neither the secret preserve of a cult of initiates nor a debating society that arrives at truth by consensus; it is not impervious to error, overconfidence, or ideological bias. The fact that most climatologists believe human activity is leading to climate change may mean nothing more than that most climatologists are wrong.

Until very recently a majority of medical researchers believed that peptic ulcers were precipitated by stress and stomach acidity, best treated with milk and relaxation. In reality, most ulcers are caused by bacterial infections, which can be eliminated easily with antibiotics. Much less is known about the earth's climate than about peptic ulcers, and the cost of the proposed remedy for global warming vastly exceeds that of a glass of milk.

Most policymakers—even those who ostensibly support the Kyoto process—seem to appreciate this imbalance, and Bonner R. Cohen correctly notes a discrepancy

between the verdurous rhetoric of left-wing European and American politicians and the measures they are actually willing to take to curb greenhouse-gas emissions. For example, the deal recently reached in Bonn to "save" Kyoto (and "shame" the United States) may not result in any emissions reductions at all, for reasons I elucidated in my article, even if it is eventually ratified by European parliaments.

Of course, this is not necessarily a bad thing. As Jocelyn Tomkin points out, no amount of rhetoric will invalidate the conclusion that, at present, there is simply no sound scientific reason to believe that increased carbon-dioxide emissions are responsible for global warming. Uncertainties about the effects of variables like cloud cover and water vapor dwarf the potential impact of human activity, and there is too much "noise" in the data to make long-term predictions about the climate with any accuracy.

Nevertheless, Mr. Levy's letter is instructive, and perhaps ironic, in that it reveals the extent to which proponents of emissions reduction and regulation are willing to treat the facts selectively in promoting their cause. It is true that a casual search of the Internet (or, better yet, a search of the scientific literature) will turn up evidence that glaciers everywhere seem to be retreating, and that the amount of summer sea ice in the Arctic has recently been decreasing. Such data are seized upon by environmental doomsayers, and immediately trumpeted by the major news outlets as proof of global warming.

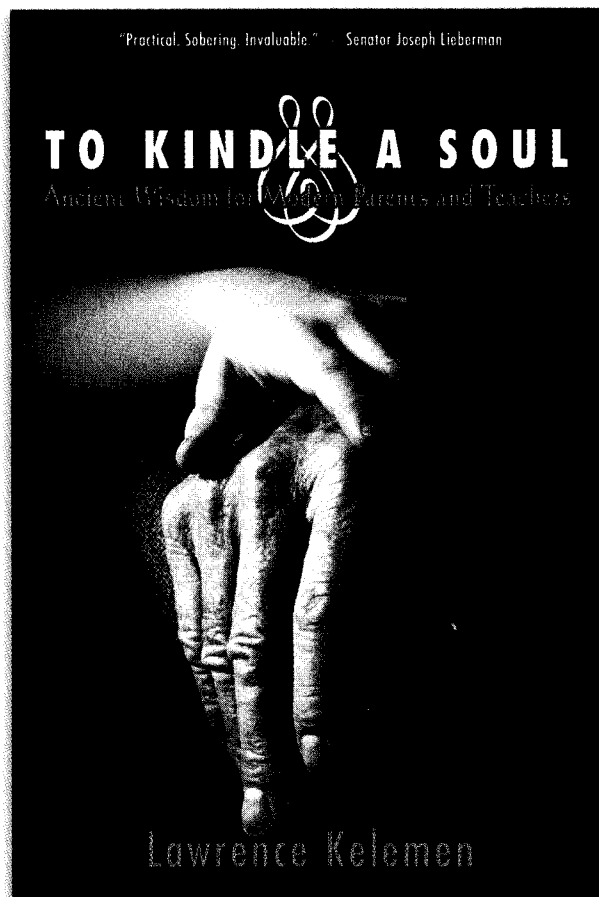
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also unearth findings that the average Arctic winter ice cap is stable, that the extent of sea ice has not changed at all in the Antarctic, and that local changes in glaciation and snow cover are not necessarily consistent with changes in atmospheric temperature. Indeed, many geologists who study ice caps and glaciers believe that we are still witnessing the aftermath of climate changes that occurred hundreds or even thousands of years ago. Yet this is reported rarely, if at all.

Why? I understand that from the perspective of the Left, it is nice to think that the complexities of the evidence can be disregarded; doing so makes it considerably easier to advocate controls, regulations, and taxes of various sorts. But, as Mr. Levy writes, this is no way to get at the truth.

International Law

TO THE EDITOR:

In his comments on Gary Jonathan Bass's book on war-crimes tribunals, *Stay the Hand of Vengeance* [Books in Review, July-August], Nicholas Rostow suggests that the recent removal of the United States from the UN Commission on Human Rights bodes ill for the prospects of due process before the new International Criminal Court (ICC). But abusive governments flock to UN human-rights bodies because membership bears no cost. By contrast, governments can join the International Criminal Court only by giving the court jurisdiction over crimes committed on their soil—the last thing dictators want. It

will thus be mostly democracies—America's closest allies—that select the ICC's judges and prosecutor.

Of course, there can be no guarantee that these officials will apply the court's extensive due-process protections conscientiously. Much will depend on how the court's culture develops. But even though there is no immediate prospect of Washington's joining the court, the United States could still exercise substantial influence by continuing to participate quietly in its evolution.

Such participation has already played a major role in shaping the court's rules and procedures, as it has also played a central part in shaping the culture of the international war-crimes tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

Unfortunately, legislation being pushed in Washington by the court's opponents would preclude such participation, substituting an ideological crusade for the national interest.

KENNETH ROTH

*Executive Director
Human Rights Watch
New York City*

NICHOLAS ROSTOW writes:

The proposed International Criminal Court should give the United States pause for a number of reasons, ranging from its potential incompatibility with the Constitution to problems of fairness and due process in an institution trying to be acceptable to all legal systems, many of which do not share our values. Several issues need to be resolved before the U.S. could even consider participating in what Kenneth Roth calls its "evolution."

First, there is the matter of consent. Most interna-

tional legal proceedings take place as a result of states' having agreed to the jurisdiction of a tribunal. As things now stand with the charter of the ICC, a state consents to the court's jurisdiction simply by conducting military operations on the territory of another state that has accepted the court. In addition, a state can invoke the ICC with respect to a particular alleged crime without submitting to the ICC's jurisdiction generally.

Thus, for example—and contrary to Mr. Roth's view—Saddam Hussein could ask the ICC to judge air attacks by the United States and its allies without subjecting his own regime to ICC scrutiny, and this whether or not the U.S. becomes a party to the court's charter. For world powers that do not want to join the ICC but are sometimes called upon to engage in armed conflict in the international community's interests and on their own behalf—as the U.S. is now doing—this basis for jurisdiction poses a real, not an imaginary, problem.

Worrisome too is how easily the ICC could be politicized, especially in applying the criteria for determining if an international crime has been committed. To take an obvious example, Israel could be singled out by its Arab enemies, who consider the very existence of the Jewish state an ongoing act of aggression and genocide.

Finally, there is the troubling effect that the ICC would have on the UN Security Council's responsibilities for maintaining international peace. The ICC charter allows the Security Council to interfere with its

own proceedings only once a year, and then only to ask the court to postpone an investigation or prosecution. Thus, the ICC arrogates to itself the authority to address important issues of security and war without the oversight of the world's great powers.

In this connection, the ICC has also reserved the right to disregard the portion of the UN charter specifying that the Security Council "shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression." No other UN organ enjoys this prerogative.

The ICC, in short, is a vehicle for transforming international politics. As one of the court's principal advocates said when its charter was concluded, "The world will never be the same after the establishment of the International Criminal Court. . . . The ICC reminds governments that realpolitik, which sacrifices justice at the altar of political settlements, is no longer accepted." Did all the countries that consented to the ICC really agree that "political settlements" are incompatible with "justice"?

Israel's Dilemma

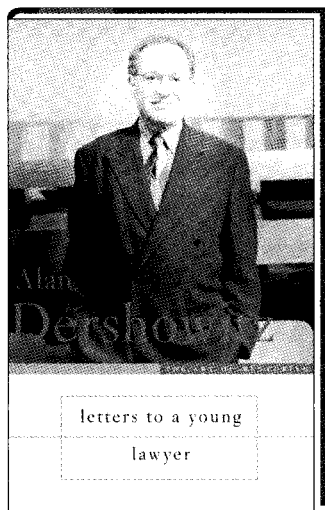
TO THE EDITOR:

Contrary to Gal Luft's suggestion in "Who is Winning the Intifada?" [July-August], this struggle is not about "winning" or "losing" but about creating a durable peace. To achieve this peace, both sides will have to compromise.

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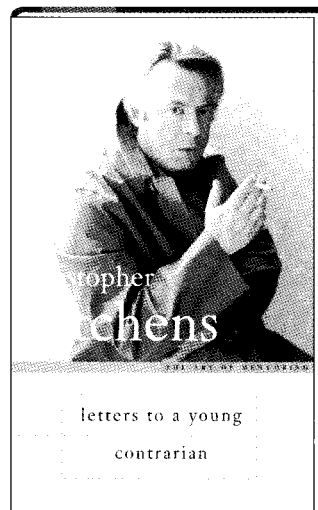


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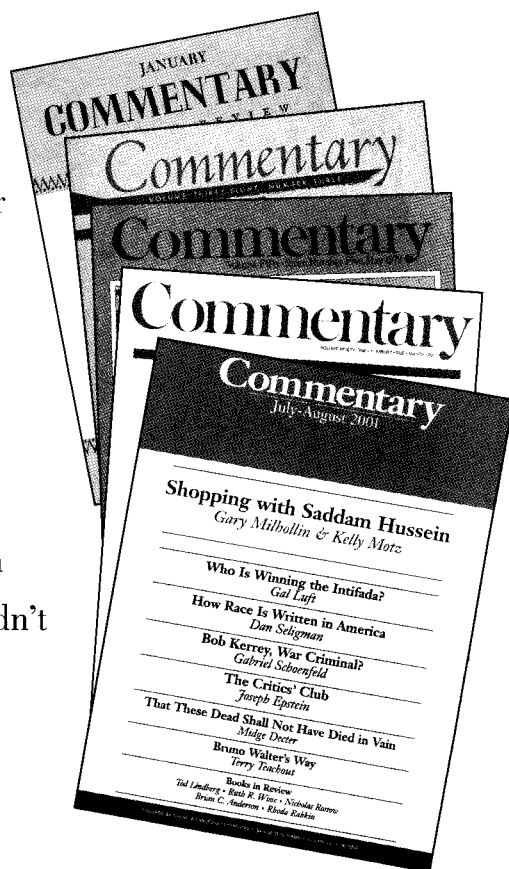
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chell committee has outlined just such a compromise: a freeze of Israeli settlements and a cessation of Palestinian violence. The Palestinians have accepted its terms, but Israel has not. In the words of Nurit Peled-Elhanan, who lost her fourteen-year-old daughter in a suicide bombing: "The [Israeli] government breeds the terrorists. They start them off. . . . They are the ones stealing [Palestinian] land, destroying the houses, uprooting the trees, erasing the villages. They are starving them, humiliating them, oppressing them."

If a Jew who has suffered such a loss can speak for reconciliation and peace, why cannot Jewish leaders?

ROLAND JAMES
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR:

Gal Luft's article reminded me of the predicament of the U.S. during its doomed intervention in Vietnam. American strategists predicted that high enemy casualties and relentless bombing would soon bring the North Vietnamese into submission. They forgot, however, with whom they were dealing. Bombing rice paddies did not affect the infrastructure of the country or the determination of the regime, and the large number of casualties did not translate into pressure on the North to come to terms. Though the Tet offensive cost the Vietcong dearly, ultimately it was a defeated U.S. that left the country.

From a military point of view, the *intifada* provides a similar case. The first *intifada*, in the late 1980's and early 1990's, lasted six years and consisted primarily of rock-throwing mobs. Its di-

rect result was the Oslo agreement, which revived Yasir Arafat after he had been written off as a casualty of the 1982 Lebanon war and gave him control of 95 percent of West Bank Palestinians and limited military power. The present *intifada* has brought with it the additional threat of firearms and mortars, as well as suicide bombings.

Unless Israel admits the mistakes it made at Oslo, and acts to reverse them, it will, like America before it, succumb to this prolonged conflict and end up offering even greater concessions than Barak promised at Camp David. The next *intifada* will involve Palestinians inside the Green Line.

ARNON RIEGER
East Falmouth, Massachusetts

GAL LUFT writes:

Few would disagree with Roland James's observation that the goal is to achieve a durable peace, or that such a peace can only be reached through a process of mutual concessions rather than bullets. But the equation proposed by the Mitchell committee is hardly the right way. The report's main flaw lies precisely in its demand that Israel make *new* concessions, like freezing settlement activity, while of the Palestinians it merely requests that, in exchange, they do what they have already committed themselves, and failed, to do many times over—namely, to combat violence and terrorism. It is surely noteworthy that in September, even after having been giv-

en a rare opportunity to rescue himself and his people from their predicament for the reasonable price of seven days of calm, Arafat failed to deliver.

At a moment when the United States is attempting to forge a unified struggle against terrorism, it is all the more crucial not to treat a crackdown by Arafat as an "exchangeable" commodity but rather as a basic norm of international behavior, required of anyone aspiring to join the family of nations.

Book Business

TO THE EDITOR:

My long-term admiration of Joseph Epstein's writings increased after reading his



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essay on the Readers' Subscription, later known as the Mid-Century Book Society ["The Critics' Club," July-August]. But it should be added that the introductory material in the book he reviews, *A Company of Readers*, shimmers with innocence and error about the business of this club and what happened behind the scenes when the house of intellect had an affair with the culture of money.

The Readers' Subscription was an admirable enterprise in its intent and choice of books, but it farmed out its "fulfillment"—that is, the processing and shipment of orders. This is a task that confounds some of the largest companies. The club's three judges—W.H. Auden, Jacques Barzun, and Lionel Trilling—were often dismayed to hear from club members who had not received a particular book, or had gotten the wrong book or bill. In 1959, they formed a partnership with me for the purpose of buying the club or, if that failed, starting a new one.

My responsibility was to find capital, serve as operational head, and edit the monthly magazine. Financing for the new club, to be called the Mid-Cen-

tury Book Society, was obtained from Arnold Bernhard, the founder of Value Line, who became the nominal president. Soon Mid-Century did all of its own fulfillment, moving the judges out of harm's way.

As Mr. Epstein notes, *A Company of Readers* never mentions how much the three members of the editorial board were paid. At Mid-Century, the annual compensation of each was \$4,000, worth much more then than now but still not an overwhelming enticement. But each of the judges also acquired an equity interest in the company of about 10 percent (as did I) and a position on its controlling board.

My impression was that Arnold Bernhard funded the company to enjoy the companionship of cultured men like Auden, Barzun, and Trilling. He was thus more surprised than anyone when Mid-Century—which rescued from obscurity works like Eric Partridge's etymological dictionary, *Origins*, and Vladimir Nabokov's *Laughter in the Dark*—also became financially successful. Thereupon he decided to vote changes that would leave him not with 51 percent but with 90

percent of the company. He encountered a barrier in me, who had been reading a book called something like *Defense Against Squeeze-Outs in Small Business*. But when I attempted to block his ploy, he terminated both my job and my shareholdings. (I sued him, and quickly won a settlement that became the seed money for the new publishing firm of Stein and Day, which Patricia Day and I superintended for more than a quarter-century.)

As for the Mid-Century Book Society, Bernhard's accountant took over the running of the club, grew a beard as a cultural appendage that might appeal to young ladies, added sex books to the mix, redesigned the club's elegant magazine in a commercial format, and in short order brought the enterprise to its knees.

SOL STEIN

Tarrytown, New York

Political Pilgrims

TO THE EDITOR:

In her review of Ronald Radosh's *Commies* [Books in Review, July-August], Ruth Wisse makes a good case for establishing support groups

for disappointed Marxists. But distinctions must be made. Marxism's demise presents as many facets as the motives that animated the minds of its followers. Most were simply true believers who for altruistic reasons succumbed to utopian ideas and wishful thinking. They deserve our compassion. But too many, propelled by less pure motives, selfishly used Marxism to exploit others. For these one has no sympathy; the only aid they deserve should be laced with irony.

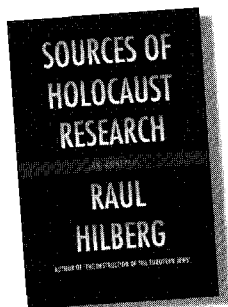
In that spirit I propose a spin-off of the well-known Traveler's Aid Society. It might be called the Fellow-Traveler's Aid Society, and its purpose would be to guide political pilgrims to their next utopian destination. Radical environmentalists, for example, will surely need its services.

LAWRENCE CRANBERG
Austin, Texas

Correction

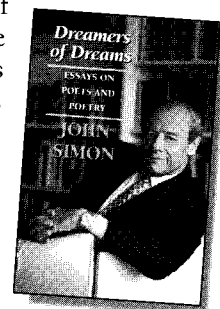
In Terry Teachout's "Noah Greenberg's Revolution" [October], the names of Max Shachtman and Jesse Simons were misspelled. We regret these errors.—ED.

RAUL HILBERG
Sources of Holocaust Research



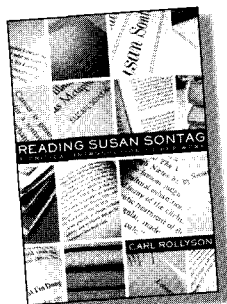
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JOHN SIMON
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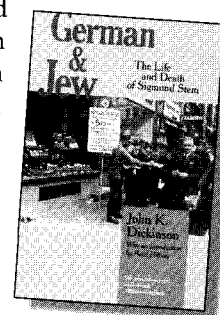
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CARL ROLLYSON
Reading Susan Sontag



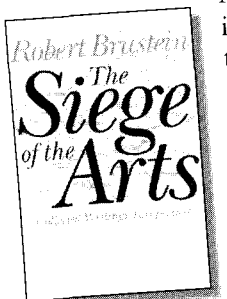
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German and Jew



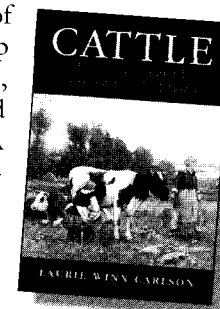
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The Danger Within: Militant Islam in America

Daniel Pipes

IN THE aftermath of the violence on September 11, American politicians from George W. Bush on down have tripped over themselves to affirm that the vast majority of Muslims living in the United States are just ordinary people. Here is how the President put it during a visit to a mosque on September 17: "America counts millions of Muslims among our citizens, and Muslims make an incredibly valuable contribution to our country. Muslims are doctors, lawyers, law professors, members of the military, entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, moms and dads." Two days later, he added that "there are millions of good Americans who practice the Muslim faith who love their country as much as I love the country, who salute the flag as strongly as I salute the flag."

These soothing words, echoed and amplified by many columnists and editorial writers, were obviously appropriate at a moment of high national tension and amid reports of mounting bias against Muslims living in the United States. And it is certainly true that the number of militant Islamic operatives with plans to carry out terrorist attacks on the United States is statistically tiny. But the situation is more complex than the President would have it.

DANIEL PIPES, a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY, is the director of the Philadelphia-based Middle East Forum, a columnist for the Jerusalem Post, and the author of Conspiracy (Free Press).

The Muslim population in this country is not like any other group, for it includes within it a substantial body of people—many times more numerous than the agents of Osama bin Laden—who share with the suicide hijackers a hatred of the United States and the desire, ultimately, to transform it into a nation living under the strictures of militant Islam. Although not responsible for the atrocities in September, they harbor designs for this country that warrant urgent and serious attention.

IN JUNE 1991, Siraj Wahaj, a black convert to Islam and the recipient of some of the American Muslim community's highest honors, had the privilege of becoming the first Muslim to deliver the daily prayer in the U.S. House of Representatives. On that occasion he recited from the Qur'an and appealed to the Almighty to guide American leaders "and grant them righteousness and wisdom."

A little over a year later, addressing an audience of New Jersey Muslims, the same Wahaj articulated a rather different message from his mild and moderate invocation in the House. If only Muslims were more clever politically, he told his New Jersey listeners, they could take over the United States and replace its constitutional government with a caliphate. "If we were united and strong, we'd elect our own emir [leader] and give allegiance to him. . . . [T]ake my word, if 6-8 million Muslims unite in America, the country will come to us." In 1995, Wahaj served as a character witness for Omar Abdel

Rahman in the trial that found that blind sheikh guilty of conspiracy to overthrow the government of the United States. More alarming still, the U.S. attorney for New York listed Wahaj as one of the “unindicted persons who may be alleged as co-conspirators” in the sheikh’s case.

The disparity between Wahaj’s good citizenship in the House and his militant forecast of a Muslim takeover—not to mention his association with violent felons—is only one example of a larger pattern common to the American Muslim scene. Another example, about which I have written recently elsewhere, involves the American Muslims for Jerusalem, an organization whose official advocacy of “a Jerusalem that symbolizes religious tolerance and dialogue” contrasts markedly with the wild conspiracy-mongering and crude anti-Jewish rhetoric in which its spokesmen indulge at closed events.¹ At a minimum, then, anyone who would understand the real views of American Muslims must delve deeper than the surface of their public statements.

Doing so, one discovers that the ambition to take over the United States is hardly a new one. The first missionaries for militant Islam, or Islamism, who arrived here from abroad in the 1920’s, unblushingly declared, “Our plan is, we are going to conquer America.” The audacity of such statements hardly went unnoticed at the time, including by Christians who cherished their own missionizing hopes. As a 1922 newspaper commentary put it:

To the millions of American Christians who have so long looked eagerly forward to the time the cross shall be supreme in every land and the people of the whole world shall have become the followers of Christ, the plan to win this continent to the path of the “infidel Turk” will seem a thing unbelievable. But there is no doubt about its being pressed with all the fanatical zeal for which the Mohammedans are noted.

But it is in recent decades, as the Muslim population in the country has increased significantly in size, social standing, and influence, and as Islamism has made its presence widely felt on the international scene, that this “fanatical zeal” has truly come into its own. A catalyzing figure in the story is the late Ismail Al-Faruqi, a Palestinian immigrant who founded the International Institute of Islamic Thought and taught for many years at Temple University in Philadelphia. Rightly called “a pioneer in the development of Islamic studies in America,” he was also the first contemporary theorist of a United States made Muslim. “Nothing

could be greater,” Al-Faruqi wrote in the early 1980’s, “than this youthful, vigorous, and rich continent [of North America] turning away from its past evil and marching forward under the banner of *Allahu Akbar* [God is great].”

Al-Faruqi’s hopes are today widely shared among educated Muslim leaders. Zaid Shakir, formerly the Muslim chaplain at Yale University, has stated that Muslims *cannot* accept the legitimacy of the American secular system, which “is against the orders and ordainments of Allah.” To the contrary, “The orientation of the Qur’an pushes us in the exact opposite direction.” To Ahmad Nawfal, a leader of the Jordanian Muslim Brethren who speaks frequently at American Muslim rallies, the United States has “no thought, no values, and no ideals”; if militant Muslims “stand up, with the ideology that we possess, it will be very easy for us to preside over this world.” Masudul Alam Choudhury, a Canadian professor of business, writes matter-of-factly and enthusiastically about the “Islamization agenda in North America.”

For a fuller exposition of this outlook, one can do no better than to turn to a 1989 book by Shamim A. Siddiqi, an influential commentator on American Muslim issues. Cryptically titled *Methodology of Dawah Ilallah in American Perspective* (more idiomatically rendered as “The Need to Convert Americans to Islam”), this 168-page study, published in Brooklyn, remains largely unavailable to general readers (neither amazon.com nor bookfinder.com listed it over a period of months) but is widely posted on Islamist websites,² where it enjoys a faithful readership. In it, in prose that makes up in intensity and vividness for what it lacks in sophistication and polish, Siddiqi lays out both a detailed rationale and a concrete plan for Islamists to take over the United States and establish “Islamic rule” (*iqamat ad-din*).

WHY AMERICA? In Siddiqi’s judgment, the need to assume control here is even more pressing than the need to sustain the revolution of the mullahs in Iran or to destroy Israel, for doing so will have a much greater positive impact on the future of Islam. America is central not for the reasons one might expect—its large population, its wealth, or the cultural influence it wields around the world—but on three other grounds.

The first has to do with Washington’s role as the premier enemy of Islamism (or, possibly, of Islam

¹ “Islam’s American Lobby,” *Jerusalem Post*, September 20, 2001.

² Here are two: <http://www.islambook.com/dawah.htm> and <http://www.halalco.com/dawah.html>.

itself). In Siddiqi's colorful language, whenever and wherever Muslims have moved toward establishing an Islamic state, the "treacherous hands of the secular West are always there . . . to bring about [their] defeat." Nor are Muslim rulers of any help, for they are "all in the pockets of the Western powers." If, therefore, Islam is ever going to attain its rightful place of dominance in the world, the "ideology of Islam [must] prevail over the mental horizon of the American people." The entire future of the Muslim world, Siddiqi concludes, "depends on how soon the Muslims of America are able to build up their own indigenous movement."

Secondly, America is central because establishing Islamism here would signal its final triumph over its only rival, that bundle of Christianity and liberalism which constitutes contemporary Western civilization. (One cannot help noting the irony that Siddiqi's tract appeared in the same year, 1989, as Francis Fukuyama's famous article speculating that, with the collapse of Communism and the apparent triumph of liberal democracy, we had begun to approach the "end of history.") And thirdly, and still more grandly, the infusion of the United States with Islamism would make for so powerful a combination of material success and spiritual truth that the establishment of "God's Kingdom" on earth would no longer be "a distant dream."

But this dream will not happen by itself. To American Muslims, writes Siddiqi, falls the paramount responsibility of bringing Islam to power in their country; and to this goal, Muslims must devote "all of their energies, talents, and resources." For this is how they will be assessed on judgment day: "Every Muslim living in the West will stand in the witness box in the mightiest court of Allah . . . in *Akhirah* [the last day] and give evidence that he fulfilled his responsibility, . . . that he left no stone unturned to bring the message of the Qur'an to every nook and corner of the country."

How this desired end is to be achieved is a question on which opinions differ in Siddiqi's world. Basically, the disagreement centers on the role of violence.

AS HAS been made irrefutably clear in recent weeks, there are indeed some, not just abroad but living among us, who see the United States as (in the phrase of Osama bin Laden) an "enemy of Islam" that must be brought to its knees and destroyed. In its broad outlines, this judgment came to be solidified during the crisis over Iraq's seizure of Kuwait in the early 1990's, when militants like bin Laden discerned a historic parallel between the

presence of American troops on the soil of Saudi Arabia and the brutal Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980's. In their dialectical view, as the *New Yorker* writer Mary Ann Weaver has explained, the United States, just like the Soviet Union before it, represented "an infidel occupation force propping up a corrupt, repressive, and un-Islamic government." And just as the Islamist *mujahideen* in Afghanistan had succeeded in defeating and driving out their occupiers, and thereby played a role in the collapse of the mighty Soviet Union itself, so Islamists might cause the collapse of the United States: one down, one to go, as it were.

To the blind sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, who after bin Laden is perhaps today's most notorious enemy of the United States, bombing the World Trade Center in 1993 was part and parcel of this revolutionary strategy to "conquer the land of the infidels" by force. The idea, as one of his followers put it, was to "bring down their highest buildings and the mighty constructions they are so proud of, in order thoroughly to demoralize them."³ And this was a duty that Islamists saw as incumbent on all Muslims; having helped humiliate the Soviets in Afghanistan, they now, as one native-born American convert to Islam proclaimed in July 1989, must "complete the march of *jihad* until we reach America and liberate her."

But there are several problems with the approach of revolutionary violence, even from the perspective of those who share its goal. The most obvious has to do with its impact on American society. Although attacks like the 1993 bombing or the suicide massacres of September 11 are intended to demoralize the American people, prompt civil unrest, and weaken the country politically, what they do instead is to bring Americans together in patriotism and purpose. Those who mastermind them, in the meantime, are often caught: Abdel Rahman is sitting out a life sentence in a federal penitentiary, his campaign of violence stillborn, while Osama bin Laden is the object of a massive manhunt to get him "dead or alive." Unlike in the very different case of the Soviet Union, it is hard to see how the use of force will succeed in wearing down this country, much less lead to a change in government.

Besides, as a number of commentators have recently pointed out, in targeting all Americans the perpetrators of Islamic violence do not bother even to discriminate between non-Muslim and Muslim vic-

³ These words were found in a notebook kept by Sayyid Abd al-Aziz Nusayr, the Egyptian immigrant who assassinated Rabbi Meir Kahane in a New York hotel in November 1990.

tims. According to preliminary estimates, several hundred Muslims died in the collapse of the World Trade Center. This is not exactly calculated to enlist the participation of most resident Muslims in a campaign of violent insurrection.⁴

FOR ALL these reasons, the non-violent way would seem to have a brighter future, and it is in fact the approach adopted by most Islamists. Not only is it legal, but it allows its enthusiasts to adopt a seemingly benign view of the United States, a country they mean to rescue and make over rather than to destroy, and it dictates a strategy of working with Americans rather than against them. As a teacher at an Islamic school in Jersey City, near New York, explains, the "short-term goal is to introduce Islam. In the long term, we must save American society." Step by step, writes a Pakistan-born professor of economics, by offering "an alternative model" to Americans, Muslims can refashion what Ismail Al-Faruqi called "the unfortunate realities of North America" into something acceptable in God's eyes.

Practically speaking, there are two main prongs to the non-violent strategy. The first involves radically increasing the number of American Muslims, a project that on the face of it would not seem very promising. Islam, after all, is still an exotic growth in the United States, its adherents representing just 1 to 2 percent of the population and with exceedingly dim prospects of becoming anything like a majority. Islamists are not so unrealistic as to think that these numbers can be substantially altered any time soon by large-scale immigration (which is politically unfeasible and might anyway provoke a backlash) or by normal rates of reproduction. Hence they focus most of their efforts on conversion.

They do so not only as a matter of expediency but on principle. For Islamists, converting Americans is the central purpose of Muslim existence in the United States, the only possible justification for Muslims to live in an infidel land. In the view of Shamim Siddiqi, there is no choice in the matter—American Muslims are "ordained by Allah" to help replace evil with good, and otherwise "have no right even to breathe." "Wherever you came from," adds Siraj Wahaj, "you came . . . for one reason—for one reason only—to establish Allah's *din* [faith]."

This imperative, relentlessly propagated by authoritative figures and promoted by leading Islamist organizations like the Muslim Student Association, has been widely adopted by Muslim Americans at large. Many attest to the sense of responsibility that flows from being an "ambassador for Islam," and are ever mindful of the cardinal im-

portance of winning new adherents. And, given what they hold to be the truth of their message and the depravity of American culture, Islamists are optimistic about their chances of success. "A life of *taqwah* [piety] will immediately attract non-Muslims toward Islam," writes Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, an important Indian Islamist, in his "Message for Muslims in the West."

He has a point: the more readily the message of Islam is available, the more converts it is likely to win. In making headway in the United States, Islam has largely depended on hands-on contact and personal experience. According to one survey, over two-thirds of American converts to Islam were motivated by the influence of a Muslim friend or acquaintance. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1964), with its moving account of redemption through Islam, has had a wide impact on American blacks (and even some whites), causing a substantial number to convert. Similarly not to be discounted are the efforts of the various Muslim organizations in the United States, whose "attempts at educating the American public about Islam" may be responsible, according to one observer, for "Islam's increasing numbers."

But if increasing numbers are necessary, they are also not sufficient. After all, whole countries—Turkey, Egypt, Algeria—have overwhelmingly Muslim populations, but Islamism is suppressed by their governments. From an Islamist point of view, indeed, the situation in Turkey is far *worse* than in the United States, for it is a more grievous thing to reject the divine message as interpreted by Islamists than merely to be ignorant of it. Therefore, in addition to building up Muslim numbers, Islamists must prepare the United States for their own brand of ideology. This means doing everything possible toward creating an Islamist environment and applying Islamic law. Activities under this heading fall into various categories.

Promoting Islamic rituals and customs in the public square. Islamists want secular authorities to permit students in public institutions, for example, to recite the *basmallah* (the formula "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate") in classroom exercises. They also want the right to broadcast over outdoor loudspeakers the five daily Islamic calls-to-prayer. Similarly, they have agitated

⁴ Upon hearing an immigrant Islamist speaker instruct an audience of Muslims that they were "obligated to desire, and when possible to participate in, the overthrow of any non-Islamic government—anywhere in the world—in order to replace it by an Islamic one," one American-born convert remembers protesting in dismay that this would involve people like himself in political treason. "Yes, that's true," was the lecturer's blithe response (Jeffrey Lang, *Even Angels Ask: A Journey to Islam in America*, 1997).

for publicly maintained prayer facilities in such institutions as schools and airports.

Privileges for Islam. Islamists seek public financial support for Islamic schools, mosques, and other institutions. They also lobby for special quotas for Muslim immigrants, try to compel corporations to make special allowances for Muslim employees, and demand the formal inclusion of Muslims in affirmative-action plans.

Restricting or disallowing what others may do. Islamists want law-enforcement agencies to criminalize activities like drinking and gambling that are offensive to Islam. While seeking wide latitude for themselves, for instance when it comes to expressing disrespect for American national symbols, they would penalize expressions of disrespect for religious figures whom Islam deems holy, especially the prophet Muhammad; punish criticism of Islam, Islamism, or Islamists; and close down critical analysis of Islam.

Some of these aims have already been achieved. Others may seem relatively minor in and of themselves, implying no drastic alterations in existing American arrangements but rather only slight adjustments in our already expansive accommodation of social "diversity." Cumulatively, however, by whittling away at the existing order, they would change the country's whole way of life—making Islam a major public presence, ensuring that both the workplace and the educational system accommodate its dictates and strictures, adapting family customs to its code of conduct, winning it a privileged position in American life, and finally imposing its system of law. Steps along the way would include more radical and intrusive actions like prohibiting conversion *out* of Islam, criminalizing adultery, banning the consumption of pork, formalizing enhanced rights for Muslims at the expense of non-Muslims, and doing away with equality of the sexes.

A MUSLIM majority? Islamic law the law of the land? Even the most optimistic Islamists concede the task will not be easy. Just as Muhammad confronted die-hard opponents in pagan Mecca, writes Siddiqi, so pious Muslims in America will face opponents, led by the "secular press cum media, the agents of capitalism, the champions of atheism (Godless creeds) and the [Christian] missionary zealots." Doing battle with them will demand focus, determination, and sacrifice.

And yet Siddiqi also thinks Muslims enjoy advantages undreamt of in Muhammad's day or in any other society than today's United States. For one

thing, Americans are hungry for the Islamist message, which "pinpoints the shortcoming of capitalism, elaborates the fallacies of democracy, [and] exposes the devastating consequences of the liberal lifestyle." For another, the United States *permits* Islamists to pursue their political agenda in an entirely legal fashion and without ever challenging the existing order. Indeed, precisely because the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, the system can be used to further Islamist aims. Democratic means are at hand for developing an active and persistent lobby, cultivating politicians, and electing Muslim representatives. Nearly a million legal immigrants arrive in the country each year, plus many more through the long coastlines and porous land borders. The courts are an all-important resource, and have already proved their worth in winning concession after concession from American corporations and public authorities.

Even so, the road will not be completely smooth. A delicate point will be reached, in Siddiqi's mind, as society polarizes between Muslim and non-Muslim camps "in every walk of life." At that point, as the struggle between Truth and Error "acquires momentum and the tension increases along with it," the "Wrong Doers" are likely to take desperate steps to "eliminate the Islamic movement and its workers by force." But if Islamists tread cautiously to navigate this point, taking special care not to alienate the non-Muslim population, eventually there will follow what Siddiqi calls a general "Rush-to-Islam." It will then be only a matter of time before Muslims find themselves not just enfranchised but actually running the show.

How much time? Siddiqi sees Islamists in power in Washington before 2020. For Wahaj, implementation of the *shari'a* in the United States "appears to be approaching fast," and in contemplating what that means his language grows ecstatic:

I have a vision in America: Muslims owning property all over, Muslim businesses, factories, *halal* meat, supermarkets, all these buildings owned by Muslims. Can you see the vision, can you see the Newark International Airport and a John Kennedy Airport and LaGuardia having Muslim fleets of planes, Muslim pilots? Can you see our trucks rolling down the highways, Muslim names? Can you imagine walking down the streets of Teaneck [New Jersey]: three Muslim high schools, five Muslim junior-high schools, fifteen public schools? Can you see the vision, can you see young women walking down the street of Newark, New Jersey, with long flowing *hijab* and long dresses? Can you

see the vision of an area of no crime, controlled by the Muslims?

IT HARDLY needs pointing out that this vision is, to say the least, farfetched, or that Islamists are deluding themselves if they think that today's newborns will be attending college in an Iranian-style United States. But neither is their effort altogether quixotic: their devotion, energy, and skill are not to be questioned, and the larger Muslim-American community for which they claim to speak is assuredly in a position, especially as its numbers grow, to affect our public life in decisive ways. Indeed, despite persistent complaints of bias against them—more voluminous than ever in the wake of the airplane hijackings on September 11—Muslim Americans have built an enviable record of socioeconomic accomplishment in this country, have won wide public acceptance of their faith, and have managed to make it particularly difficult for anyone to criticize their religion or customs.

Whether and to what degree the community as a whole subscribes to the Islamist agenda are, of course, open questions. But what is not open to question is that, whatever the majority of Muslim Americans may believe, most of the *organized* Muslim community agrees with the Islamist goal—the goal, to say it once again, of building an Islamic state in America. To put it another way, the major Muslim organizations in this country are in the hands of extremists.

One who is not among them is Muhammad Hisham Kabbani of the relatively small Islamic Supreme Council of America. In Kabbani's reliable estimation, such "extremists" have "taken over 80 percent of the mosques" in the United States. And not just the mosques: schools, youth groups, community centers, political organizations, professional associations, and commercial enterprises also tend to share a militant outlook, hostile to the prevailing order in the United States and advocating its replacement with an Islamic one.

Not all these organizations and spokesmen are open about their aspirations, though some are: for example, the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Herndon, Virginia, proclaims its academic purpose to be nothing less than "the Islamization of the humanities and the social sciences." But the best-known organizations—the ones whose members are invited to offer prayers and invocations before Congress or to attend White House functions, or whose representatives accompanied the President on his September 17 visit to a mosque—tend to hide their true colors behind arch-respectable goals. Thus, the American Muslim Council

claims to work "toward the political empowerment of Muslims in America," the Council on American-Islamic Relations is "putting faith into action," and the Muslim Public Affairs Council seeks only to make American Muslims "an influential component in U.S. public affairs."

But as I have documented at greater length on other occasions,⁵ much if not everything about the conduct of these organizations points to their essential agreement with the "conquer America" agenda, and from time to time their leaders—including Al-Faruqi and Shakir—have even said as much. As for Siraj Wahaj, he is a top figure in the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the Islamic Society of North America, the Muslim Alliance in North America, and the Muslim Arab Youth Association, and his views contaminate every single one of them. It is not accurate to say, as President Bush said of the Islamist leaders with whom he met on September 17, that they "love America as much as I do."

That a significant movement in this country aspires to erode its bedrock social and legal arrangements, including the separation of church and state, and has even developed a roadmap toward that end, poses a unique dilemma, especially at this moment. Every responsible public official, and every American of good faith, is bent on drawing a broad distinction between terrorists operating in the name of Islam and ordinary Muslim "moms and dads." It is a true and valid distinction, but it goes much too far, and if adhered to as a guideline for policy it will cripple the effort that must be undertaken to preserve our institutions.

What such an effort would look like is a subject unto itself, but at a minimum it would have to entail the vigilant application of social and political pressure to ensure that Islam is not accorded special status of any kind in this country, the active recruitment of moderate Muslims in the fight against Islamic extremism, a keener monitoring of Muslim organizations with documented links to Islamist activity, including the support of terrorism, and the immediate reform of immigration procedures to prevent a further influx of visitors or residents with any hint of Islamist ideology. Wherever that seditious and totalitarian ideology has gained a foothold in the world, it has wrought havoc, and some societies it has brought to utter ruin. The preservation of our existing order can no longer be taken for granted; it needs to be fought for.

⁵ See, in COMMENTARY, "Are Muslim Americans Victimized?" (November 2000), "How Elijah Muhammad Won" (June 2000), "How Dare You Defame Islam" (November 1999), and "America's Muslims Against America's Jews" (May 1999).

What Israel Must Now Do to Survive

Mark Helprin

WITH THE attack of September 11, the calculus of events in the Middle East has been sharply altered, but the fundamentals remain the same. Even the Gulf war—which in response to provocation of a different nature produced, a decade ago, the extraordinary cooperation of the world's greater and lesser powers, the largest single military operation in history, and a brilliant and unambiguous tactical victory—did not change them.

In Iraq, Saddam Hussein still rules; in Israel, the second *intifada* has been more ferocious than the first; in regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict, American policy has consisted not of deliberate inaction, which might have forced both the Arab states and the Palestinians toward accommodation of Israel, but of frenetic activism, the major operational component of which has been implied or actual pressure on Israel to accommodate the Arabs. And, despite protestations to the contrary, terrorism has been tolerated, and therefore encouraged.

The price of this flaccid toleration of terrorism has been its appearance on American soil and its escalation beyond the proportions of a Pearl Harbor. As we continue to sift through the ruins, it is clear that a war

on terrorism must of necessity endure longer than the Gulf war; but it is not clear that the United States will summon the power or resolution it devoted to fighting Saddam Hussein (even if it then forfeited the end game), and of which America is always capable if rightly led and inspired.

Seriously to pursue and obliterate the terrorist networks, to punish and deter the distant states that harbor them, and to liquidate in those states the nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and their infrastructure that are the real and present danger to this country will require of Americans the sacrifice of wealth, habit, custom, and lives. Though the war against terrorism may develop according to its own logic, and acquire the doggedness for which America is noted, it may not—especially if the terrorists knowingly quiet themselves so as to empower the forces of inertia and of the Left to break the resolution, official and non-official, that America has managed thus far.

Even should it suffer a more catastrophic blow before it begins to move as it can, the United States will survive. Its sinews of power still are intact and when mobilized are without question irresistible. Israel, however, has no such margin. And therefore it must be prepared, in the context of its alliance with the United States, to think differently and operate independently.

Independence is necessitated not only by the difference in scale between the two countries. Already in the early days after September 11, it was evident that, in the difficult task ahead, the United States had cho-

MARK HELPRIN, the well-known novelist, is a contributing editor of the Wall Street Journal and writes widely on military and strategic affairs. The present essay, in somewhat different form, will appear as the afterword to *The Middle East Peace Process: An Autopsy*, a collection of essays drawn from the pages of COMMENTARY that will be published by Encounter Books in December.

sen a course in which success would depend in part on the recruitment of Middle Eastern regimes threatened by Islamism—a thing quite delicate that, from the American perspective, has meant demanding of Israel the same kind of self-abnegation America asked of it, and received, during the Gulf war, and the same kind of self-abnegation America asked of it, and received, after Oslo. To the extent that Israel cannot afford to abnegate itself, it must be self-reliant, and it must, of course, be self-reliant in any case.

For a short time, Israel may in some respects enjoy more freedom of action, and it will undoubtedly receive more military support from the United States, although much will be expected of it in return. But just as the spectacular and simultaneous fall of the Soviet Union and American victory in the Gulf war did not alter Israel's security situation except for the worse, so the apparently new world after September 11 will not alleviate Israel's problems. Even as the threat to Israel recedes temporarily to the background, it remains; indeed, its recession may make for more danger if it becomes the cause of neglect.

IF THE current *intifada* drags on, and in anticipation of the next, it is important to keep in mind that throughout what used to be called the civilized but is now merely the developed world, polite intellectual society has customarily displayed for the Palestinian "resistance" a greater deferential admiration even than it once reserved for the aggressive powers of Communism. As in the cold war, not weakness of mind but a want of courage has allowed the Left to equate consistently unequal moral propositions; to surrender to the relentless pressure of the primitive, the delusional, and the aggrieved; and thus to mix its lot, sometimes coyly, sometimes not, with terrorists, Islamists, and other self-declared enemies of Western civilization.

Is it necessary to state that this admiration is misplaced? As admirable as sacrificial struggle may be in the abstract, it is not admirable to push with every ounce of one's being for a violent revolution and then call this "resistance." It is not admirable to initiate and sustain insurrection so as to present oneself as its victim. It is not admirable to encourage children to give their lives to the television cameras for the sake of embarrassing an enemy that does not in any way want to shoot them but finds them deliberately and provocatively placed among riflemen spewing deadly fire. It is not admirable to make war in a fashion so primitive that one cannot grasp the elemental distinction between armed combatants and women and children, infants even, whom one deliberately targets and over whose death one rejoices. It is not admirable to revel

in the blood of one's enemies, as in the Palestinian murders of the lost Israeli reservists in Ramallah last year, and to drink it, literally, as in the case of Black September's 1971 assassination of the Jordanian prime minister in Cairo. Nor is it admirable to do such things in the name of a historical claim that affords no right or justification whatsoever to one's opponent and admits no fault whatsoever of one's own.

The judgment of history should be straightforward: the almost ten-year-old Oslo misadventure was born of misconception, delusion, conformity, and cowardice. But not even the most startling and obvious evidence may be enough to revise the common wisdom. And if the common wisdom holds, the Palestinians will have reason to continue their policy.

What is their policy? It is, like the boa constrictor, to apply continual pressure, always tightening when the prey thrashes. It is to gain broad sympathy in the hope that the West will abandon Israel and the Arabs will unite against it, stimulated by outrages Israel wishes to avoid and the Palestinians to provoke. Thus, quite apart from the events of September 11, the destiny of Israel has been passing through the hands of the peacemakers into the hands of the war fighters. And although many people recoil from such a fact to the point of denying it, it is a fact nonetheless, and in the words of Winston Churchill, a statesman far greater than any who have touched of late upon the question of Palestine, facts are better than dreams.

CONTRARY TO the wisdom of the safe and chattering classes, Israel does not enjoy an assured military advantage, which is why Yasir Arafat may yet hope that before his death he can provoke the cataclysm that will exploit and prove this. In October of 1973, what stood between the rapidly advancing Egyptian army in the Sinai and an Israel that had yet to mobilize was not so much Egyptian hesitancy or fear of overextension as the existence of Israel's young nuclear deterrent. Since then, four Islamic states have attempted to acquire nuclear weapons, one has succeeded, and another may have; American arms have swelled Arab arsenals; Israel's strategic depth has been reduced from what it once was to almost nothing; its martial ethos has been drastically diminished; and the millions of Palestinians living within Israel's lines of defense have become intimate with the country of their enemy, have organized themselves, acquired weapons, and established an army. Whereas all this is not insuperable, and countervailing factors exist in Israel's favor, the threat is mortal nonetheless. And only by confronting it rather than by chasing the illusion that Arab enmity has in any way been assuaged will Israel find its salvation.

If Israel is to survive, it must prepare more assiduously than it has yet done for four types of warfare: political war on the world stage, civil war, conventional war, and a war of weapons of mass destruction. As much as it should try to avoid fighting without benefit of patronage or allies, it must be ready, in extremis, to do so. And despite its long exhaustion it has to prepare its defenses with the gravity of a people who once more in modern memory are facing the prospect of destruction.

POLITICAL WARFARE first: the Barak years were a few but seemed like a millennium, as the failings of previous governments were compressed into spasmodic tropisms of surrender. In view of the upshot—the latest *intifada* and the world's response—Israel will have to recalibrate its approach to international politics. In particular, it must be willing to give up even American support rather than put itself in an untenable position. That is simply because a truly untenable position offers no second chance. Given American pragmatism, Israel's honest and necessary refusal to place itself in jeopardy for the sake of genuine American interests will sometimes be worth the risk, and, for the sake of merely wishful diplomatic initiatives, will always be.

Just as Israel need not give way to utopian diplomacy, it also need not forever lose the war of opinion. Everything the Palestinians do, every action, statement, initiative, and act of terrorism, is an assertion of their fundamental argument of the Palestine question. The root of their power is that they live and breathe the elemental. Israel shirks from this as if its own arguments were weak or its survival assured, neither of which is true. It must learn once again to stand its ground and return argument for argument, not only because it unashamedly claims justice but because its survival is directly at stake. It must state with clarity not only that its right to existence is indisputable but that the Palestinians and their Arab allies have never been willing to compromise, that they have been consistently absolutist, have made war after war, embrace violence as their policy and express pride in their atrocities, have created more Jewish refugees than the Palestinian refugees whom they have created in large part as well, and speak one way among themselves and another way to the world.

Next, civil warfare: Israel's ill-advised incorporation of the Palestinians into its national life has already brought about a de-facto civil war, one that has the potential to intensify in conjunction with an attack from without. Rare is the nation at war that must fight simultaneously on and within its frontiers, as Israel is obliged to do even when at "peace."

In support of an external attack, Palestinians organized in Spetsnaz-like units could bring mass terror to Israel's cities, block its mobilization, box in its badly concentrated nuclear forces simply by obstructing the roads necessary to their deployment, and attack air bases, arsenals, and military targets crucial to command and control.

That Israel acquiesced in arming the Palestinians is beyond understanding. But it can counter the Palestinian army in its midst if it creates fortified blocking and surveillance points along the "green line" dividing pre- and post-June 1967 Israel, as well as a mechanized infantry reserve cracked into fittingly small and highly mobile formations, and a corps of new special-forces units. It will have to arm, organize, and train able-bodied civilians along the lines of English home defense during World War II. As difficult and costly as urban warfare may be, the advantage lies with the defender, and it is an advantage that can be multiplied many times over by sensible and meticulous preparation.

In this *intifada* as in the previous one in the late 1980's, the greatest asset of Palestinian forces has been Israeli reluctance to fire upon unarmed crowds. A real war will assuredly liberate among Israelis the combative energy many Palestinians believe has been lost, but there is no question that Palestinian forces active in the initial stages of an attack will degrade Israel's powers of conventional war. That is all the more reason for Israel not to take them for granted.

Which brings us to the third type of warfare. Without doubt, the hope of Arab planners is to leverage their combined assets with the support of Palestinian raids to throw Israel sufficiently off-balance to wear it down in armored and aerial campaigns. After the peace accords with Egypt in 1978, the 120 miles of strategic depth that Israel had acquired in the Sinai ceased to exist. The defensive lines of the West Bank have also been breached as a Palestinian army has arisen within them in slow motion during the years of illusion.

Israel has not been neglectful of conventional war-fighting, and its skills in aerial combat, for example, provide a great advantage over the forces potentially arrayed against it. But were the Arabs to coalesce in a military alliance as they have done three times in the last half-century, and were they to display unexpected competence and imagination, as they did in 1973, it would be of no little moment that they can field roughly 2,000 combat aircraft, of which 600 are first-line and largely American, against Israel's roughly 800, of which 400 are first-line. This would be especially dangerous if the surge of fighters were supported by surface-to-air missiles

and radar-directed guns as they were in 1973, and if an initial attack on Israeli bases and command and control, by irregulars or surface-to-surface missiles, had degraded Israel's qualitative advantages and its absolute numbers alike.

In answer to conventional-force imbalances and surprises, Israel will have to enhance its military capacity and enrich its formations with, for example, an additional 200 first-line fighters and more attack helicopters, artillery, and infantry stand-off weapons. Diversion of more GDP to defense could substantially augment Israel's powers—and because of its situation, every power in Israel's possession needs augmentation to the point of overkill. In the decade 1970-1980, Israel devoted an average of 29.5 percent of GDP to defense. Now, with a real per-capita GDP several times higher, and therefore commensurately greater discretion in expenditures, it devotes only 9 percent. This is imprudent and without justification. Although diligent preparation is not merely a matter of money, it is mainly a matter of money. Apart from the direct effect, the more unambiguously Israel can overshadow would-be assailants in conventional war, the less likely they will be to exploit opportunities to attack it.

AS RELEVANT to Israel's security as are international politics, the new Palestinian army, and conventional forces, they are not nearly as important as weapons of mass destruction. Israel's small size, high population density, and urban character make it exceedingly vulnerable to such weapons, and it is neither a coincidence nor in reaction to Israel's own nuclear capacity that Libya, Iraq, and possibly Iran have nuclear-weapons programs; that in varying degree Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Iran possess chemical and/or biological weapons; and that North Korea successfully tested ballistic missiles financed by Iran, which may have at least two former Soviet tactical nuclear warheads suitable for attachment to the missiles of which it has been the sugar daddy. Though the various production timetables are uncertain, "Islamic" bombs exist already in Pakistan, which, despite the recent infusion of American support, is not that many steps away from a fundamentalist upwelling that could Talibanize its government.

One need not be versed in the arcana of nuclear effects, blast damage, and chemical/biological wind plumes—one need merely look at the map—to see that a nuclear-armed enemy willing to weather Israeli retaliation could either destroy the country right off or combine a lesser attack with other ac-

tions to break its resistance. Nuclear deterrence depends upon rational actors. The murderous potentates and semi-psychotic visionaries with whom the Middle East is amply stocked are not always interested in rational calculation. Like Hitler, the Mahdi, or the Boxers, they tend to believe in destiny or divine protection, and their role in history has always been to jump off the cliff inexplicably. As Hitler might have said, and Saddam Hussein might say today, "This is what I do."

What can Israel do? It can embark, first of all, upon a more intensive civil-defense program, on the model of Switzerland and Sweden: that it has not done so already is reprehensible. This means appropriate shelters, immunizations, stockpiling of antidotes, provision of protective clothing and air filtration, etc., as if for a siege.

Then there is missile defense, which is the equivalent for Israel of David's five smooth stones. As everything may ride on a few seconds of combat, one can only hope that Israel has exceeded itself in the development of this last line of protection. And the line that stands just *before* it demands not only the exact intelligence necessary for Israel to preempt the use of weapons of mass destruction, but the will to do so.

Lately there has been a dearth of preventive attacks against the region's facilities for nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, perhaps because of American pressure or because, in the years that Bill Clinton ate, Israel forgot that facts are better than dreams. Is it not obvious that now is the time, when American and Israeli interests with regard to weapons of mass destruction plainly coincide, for Israel to destroy the laboratories, reactors, processing plants, and depots whence untold terror might arise? Precisely this kind of creative destruction should be America's first imperative, and Israel's as well. It should be Russia's, England's, and France's, too, and that of every civilized nation.

In forging a broad coalition to pursue its war against terrorism, the United States may be turned from this imperative, not only because it may be too daunting for mere politicians to contemplate but because it will obviously be rather difficult to enlist the aid of the Arab world in destroying the weapons that are abuilding throughout the Arab world. But if, for the sake of forging a coalition that does not want to be forged, the United States abandons the destruction of weapons that must be destroyed, perhaps Israel can help to shore up its courage. Such a thing seems perilous, and it is, but hardly more perilous than its alternative.

The Wages of Durban

Arch Puddington

IN THE wake of the horrific attacks on New York and Washington by fanatical Islamic terrorists, the world has all but forgotten the conference on racism sponsored by the United Nations in Durban, South Africa. But in the days just prior to the assault on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) was very much in the news, and for reasons that are altogether relevant to the mass murder that took place on September 11.

While there are many reasons to deplore the WCAR proceedings, three dominant themes deserve particular attention in the light of subsequent events. First and foremost, Durban provided a platform for the expression of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic hatred. Although this was not the first UN venue to single out Israel for special attack, it was perhaps unique in the virulence of the language employed, and in its underlying assumption that Israel deserved not simply to be condemned but to be destroyed. A coalition led by regimes that persecute their own people—and in some cases harbor international terrorists—sought by formal declaration to delegitimize the Jewish state, demonize its people, and mobilize a global movement against its existence as a country. This coalition would itself have had little difficulty in justifying and even praising acts of terror against Israel.

ARCH PUDDINGTON is vice president for research at Freedom House. He is currently writing a biography of the trade-union leader Lane Kirkland.

A second theme was anti-Americanism. While the most abusive treatment was reserved for Israel, the United States was singled out for attack on a number of counts, most notably as a society that treats darker-skinned peoples with contempt and where new manifestations of racism are emerging everywhere. For most of those present at Durban, America was a country to be condemned, not admired—an attitude only strengthened by Washington's decision to withdraw from the WCAR in solidarity with Israel.

Third, Durban represented a repudiation of liberal democracy. Although the anti-democratic bias was most vividly on display in the debate over the payment of reparations for slavery and colonialism, it was inherent in an agenda that highlighted the problems of the democratic world, where countries have adopted elaborate mechanisms to root out discrimination, and minimized or ignored the much more serious and in some cases lethal ethnic and racial crises that afflict non-Western states.

THE WCAR was conceived in 1997 by Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. A former president of Ireland, Mrs. Robinson had earned a reputation as someone willing, even eager, to point a finger at states she considered to be in violation of international norms. Earlier this year, Mrs. Robinson commissioned a series of reports on the Israel-Palestinian crisis that Israelis correctly regarded as

one-sided and biased, with little attention paid to acts of violence or terrorism committed by the Palestinian side. She had also moved aggressively to expand the human-rights mandate beyond such traditional concerns as political freedom, freedom of the press, and state persecution of individual citizens to encompass and elevate such new and complex questions as social rights, cultural rights, and the "right to development."

The Durban conference—portentously titled the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance—was convened with the ambitious goal of devising strategies to counter prejudice in all its manifestations and in every part of the world. In proposing the WCAR, Mrs. Robinson and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, himself an enthusiastic supporter of the venture, clearly expected to avoid the fate of two previous such UN forums in 1978 and 1983. Both had been boycotted by the United States and Israel in protest over their anti-Zionist agendas, and both ended in shambles. But in 1991 the General Assembly had repealed its infamous 1975 resolution identifying Zionism as a form of racism, and in subsequent years Israel had attained a modest measure of acceptance in international institutions that had previously treated it as a pariah. And so, despite inauspicious precedents, Durban's organizers believed that this time, catastrophe could be averted.

But then, starting in the fall of last year, came the new *intifada*, and with it a decision on the part of the Arab world to amplify substantially what was an already vituperative anti-Israel propaganda campaign, and to work toward the isolation of Israel in every available forum. A preview of things to come was readily available in the Arab press and in radio broadcasts featuring Holocaust denial, demands for the obliteration of Israel, and exhortations to murder Jews. After a visit to the Middle East last fall, Mary Robinson described herself as appalled by the murderous invective on Palestinian radio. Nevertheless, she expressed optimism that the Durban conference could actually contribute to peace, providing "an opportunity for reflection and reconciliation."

Within a few months, it should have been clear that reconciliation was not on the Arab world's agenda. In a preparatory meeting last February—held, incredibly enough, in Tehran—Islamic delegates gained approval for inserting in the conference's official declaration paragraph after paragraph of anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic formulations. In a series of subsequent meetings, no agreement could be won to remove this offensive language, despite

a warning from Secretary of State Colin Powell that the United States would boycott Durban should it remain. When the conference opened on August 31, delegates were confronted with an official draft document containing the anti-Israel language proposed at the Tehran meeting.

The declaration referred to Israeli "ethnic cleansing of the Arab population of historic Palestine." It described Israel's policies as a "new kind of apartheid, a crime against humanity." It denounced "practices of racial discrimination" by Israel, and condemned something called "Zionist practices against Semitism" (meaning, presumably, Arabs). It talked of "the increase of racist practices of Zionism and anti-Semitism [again in an ambiguous sense] in various parts of the world, as well as the emergence of racist and violent movements based on racist and discriminatory ideas, in particular the Zionist movement, which is based on race superiority." And in a final malicious thrust, the drafters left open for further decision the question of whether to spell the word Holocaust with an upper- or lower-case "h," with some countries arguing that Hitler's genocide had been a Jewish fabrication and others denying that Jews had been the focus of mass murder.

During her time at the UN, Mary Robinson had frequently inveighed against the proliferation of hate speech on the Internet. At Durban, the official document was one of the most flagrant examples of hate speech to surface in recent memory. And to make matters worse, the obscene phrases of this declaration were overshadowed by the ugliness of the conference proceedings. In speech after speech, Israel was attacked in the most loathsome terms—by Yasir Arafat, by Fidel Castro (who saved his most scathing comments for the United States), and by representatives of some of the world's most oppressive regimes. A delegate from Iran called Zionism "the greatest manifestation of racism" and demanded that anti-Semitism (in its proper sense of discrimination against Jews) be struck from the conference's official register of bigotries because it is not a "contemporary form of racism." Syria weighed in with the claim that the Holocaust is a "Jewish lie"; Egypt insisted that it would not accept a conference declaration that did not explicitly identify Israel as a racist state.

NOT to be outdone were the delegates to a parallel conference for representatives of nongovernmental organizations (NGO's). The presence of these groups was in keeping with what has become normal procedure at international

gatherings, where those who claim to speak for “civil society” are invited to participate and, in some cases, serve as expert advisers in the drafting of treaties and declarations. But as the world learned at the WCAR, the question of what constitutes a legitimate nongovernmental organization is highly elastic.

Or, to be more accurate, highly ideological. Although the NGO community is in theory meant to represent all important constituencies and perspectives, in practice it is tilted strongly to the liberal/Left. Those in attendance at the WCAR did include a number of mainstream organizations—most of the major Jewish groups were present—but the conference was dominated by intensely political, single-issue groups whose representatives seemed locked in competition over which qualified as the most slanderously anti-Semitic.

There was, to begin with, the official NGO declaration, a document so repellent that even Mary Robinson refused to accept it. The document accused Israel of practicing a new kind of racism, of colonialism, of committing war crimes, racist crimes against humanity, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and massive violations of human rights and humanitarian law. It called for the reinstitution of the Zionism/racism resolution, endorsed a Palestinian right of return to Israel proper, and condemned Israel’s Law of Return as an instrument of an apartheid regime. Leaving nothing to chance, the statement called for the creation of a special UN committee to prosecute Israeli war crimes and to isolate Israel from the rest of the international community.

To be sure, many of the assembled NGO’s disavowed this contemptible document, and some complained that “Bolshevik” tactics had been used by conference organizers to ram through the anti-Semitic vitriol. But if a majority opposed the hate language, a critical mass clearly favored its inclusion.

Even more disturbing was the tepid response of some of the major human-rights and civil-rights groups. Thus, Reed Brody of Human Rights Watch, seeking to distance his organization from the declaration’s “intemperate language,” noted quite mildly that “the use of the word genocide is not appropriate” in characterizing Israel, while in the next breath adding that Israel “commits serious abuses, including extrajudicial executions, torture, and arbitrary arrests.”

As regrettable as was Brody’s bit of equivocation, the reaction of Amnesty International (AI) was deplorable. While it did not endorse the NGO declaration, it declined to repudiate it. The organization’s chairman, Irene Khan, referring to “the

contentious and complex nature of some of the problems” at Durban, did not so much as mention that these “problems” involved blatant expressions of racist anti-Semitism. Not, however, that AI was incapable of high moral dudgeon, at least when the issue involved the United States: one of its representatives described as “disgraceful, reprehensible, and morally indefensible” the decision by the American State Department to send a low-level delegation to Durban instead of one led by Secretary of State Powell.

In addition to the official resolution, the NGO sessions featured an ongoing anti-Semitic carnival that further envenomed the atmosphere. Delegates from Islamic countries, assisted by a rabble bused or flown into Durban for the occasion, chanted anti-Israel slogans, handed out the vilest sort of anti-Jewish literature, and sponsored anti-Semitic marches and rallies at which participants were adorned with T-shirts bearing anti-Zionist messages. In one incident, an Egyptian lawyers’ group distributed a pamphlet featuring cartoons that might have come straight out of *Der Stürmer*, with hooknosed Jews grinning over the blood-soaked bodies of Palestinians. Another leaflet had Hitler saying, “If I had not lost, Israel would not exist today.” A bullying mob broke up a panel session sponsored by Jewish groups and a press conference by Jewish NGO’s. Some Jewish attendees had to remove their identification badges or their yarmulkes in fear of overt acts of violence, verbal or physical.

IF THE demonization of Israel and Jews was Durban at its ugliest, the debate over reparations was its theater of the absurd. As was the case with Israel and Zionism, the WCAR’s preliminary declaration featured lengthy sections condemning slavery and colonialism, and demanding that guilty states issue apologies and compensate the victims with a generous package of debt relief, Marshall Plan-type aid programs, and outright financial reparations.

This official document was crafted so as to direct its indictment at two, and only two, sources of slavery and colonialism: Western Europe and the United States. While Russia’s colonial empire was nearly as extensive as that of Great Britain, was enforced with systematic brutality, involved the suppression of local cultures, and ended but ten years ago with the breakup of the Soviet Union, there were no calls at Durban for Russian compensation to Estonia, Armenia, or Ukraine. Nor was much said about contemporary slavery; to do so would have embarrassed predominantly Islamic countries like Mauritania and Sudan and possibly reminded

the world that Arab states were the world's main slaveholders throughout the Middle Ages and until the practice was abolished by the Western colonial powers (only to be reinstated in many places when they departed). No, at Durban the countries called to account for their past sins were Western, predominantly white, free-market, and democratic.

In previous times, a similar clamor for reparations would have been politely ignored, much as the proposals for a New International Economic Order were ignored during the 1970's. In the post-cold war period, however, it is no longer considered prudent to treat conferences like the WCAR as forums for the venting of third-world frustrations, or to regard their declarations and manifestos as meaningless.

The reason has to do with the growing importance of international law, and international human-rights law in particular. Especially in Europe, courts are increasingly giving precedence to provisions of international treaties even when they clash with domestic legislation. Because of this new and unpredictable legal environment, European countries that had the most extensive colonial empires—Britain, France, Holland, Spain—fought with tenacity to prevent the conference's final declaration from labeling the slave trade a "crime against humanity." At some future date, they feared, an aggrieved African state or a group of descendants of slaves might cite Durban as authoritative evidence in legal action seeking billions upon billions in damages for "crimes against humanity" committed centuries ago.

Not that Africa itself spoke with a single voice at Durban. The most commonsensical observations were in fact expressed by Abdoulaye Wade, the democratically elected president of Senegal. A descendant of slave-owning African kings, Wade noted that everyone, Africans included, suffered from slavery's taint, called demands for reparations "childish," and said that the lack of democracy was a more serious problem than racial discrimination, a message that few at the WCAR wanted to hear. Echoing Wade was another democratically elected African president, Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo, who asserted that "monetary compensation [for slavery] would hurt the dignity of Africans."

THESE SENTIMENTS failed to convince other African delegates. Nor did they impress the hundreds of black Americans who flocked to Durban seeking ammunition for their ongoing campaign for reparations from the American government and private institutions. Led by Jesse Jackson

and a delegation from the Congressional Black Caucus, and including a large representation from various black-nationalist fringe groups, the Americans constituted the noisiest and most aggressive pro-reparations bloc at the conference. Jackson, apparently taking his campaign to shake money loose from American corporations into the global arena, was a pervasive presence at Durban, dividing his time between denunciations of the United States for withdrawing from the conference and limelight-grabbing negotiations with Yasir Arafat over the anti-Israel rhetoric in the declaration. On this latter score, Jackson's concern stemmed primarily from his worry that the Zionism/racism controversy could overshadow the reparations debate; unable to utter a single critical phrase about the behavior of the Arab bloc, he instead bemoaned that the conference was being "hijacked by the Middle East conflict," when in fact it was being destroyed by the Palestinians and their allies.

Yet while the reparations issue was indeed somewhat eclipsed by the furor over Israel, some black American delegates exuded confidence that their cause would eventually triumph. And by this they meant something ambitious in the extreme. Where Africans generally restricted themselves to demanding formal apologies for slavery and relief from foreign debt, black Americans spoke of compensation in the trillions of dollars.

That, anyway, has been the declared goal of lawyers like Johnnie Cochran and Charles Ogletree, who are supervising batteries of legal experts in the preparation of lawsuits. As precedents, Ogletree and others cite the modest compensation paid by the United States to Japanese-Americans detained during World War II, money paid to Holocaust survivors by the German government and other sources, and compensation made by Iraq after its 1990 occupation of Kuwait. That these payments were limited to the actual victims of persecution is dismissed as irrelevant; American blacks, it is argued, suffer even today from "post-slavery traumatic syndrome," a condition which, when reinforced by pervasive American racism, is said to prevent blacks from attaining equal and dignified lives.

The proposition that apologies and reparations will enhance either African development or racial equality in America is, of course, utter nonsense. More than that, the reparations idea is a major step backward, representing as it does a revival of the notion that Africa's climb to prosperity depends primarily on foreign handouts and that racial equality in America can be achieved only if the

state commits itself to a massive redistributive transfer of money to black citizens.

Yet blame for this travesty should not be directed solely at African leaders or the American champions of reparations. The West, too, bears responsibility for what might be called the Durban mindset. Why, after all, should the WCAR *not* have demanded apologies and reparations, given the model of President Bill Clinton's highly publicized apologies to Africa and Central America—in the case of Africa, for his own inaction in Rwanda; in the case of Central America, and quite wrongheadedly, for American policies during the cold war. Following in Clinton's path, Prime Minister Tony Blair recently apologized to Ireland for British policies that contributed to the potato famine some 150 years ago, while, at Durban itself, German foreign minister Joschka Fischer delivered a fulsome apology for his country's experience, minimal though it was, as a colonial power.

Likewise suffusing both the conference proceedings and the documents was another export commodity of American liberalism: the theme of victimization, with its obsessive focus on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, the transgendered, and, of more recent vintage, globalization. Conference declarations criticized countries that had failed to adopt the requisite multicultural or multilingual policies—no one at the WCAR spoke favorably of assimilation or the melting pot. Aggressive policing, racial profiling, and the death penalty were ritualistically denounced—American NGO's saw to that, and Representative Cynthia McKinney, a leader of the Congressional Black Caucus, was on hand to urge that the UN dispatch a special team to investigate America's "racist" criminal-justice system. The declaration even called for universal affirmative action, with "special quotas in educational institutions, housing, political parties, parliaments, employment, especially in the judiciary, police, army, and other civil services."

UNDERLYING THIS whole unedifying spectacle was the assumption that, just as the conference declaration asserted, racism is "gaining ground" throughout the world. And there are indeed examples of racial and ethnic violence in recent years, some with horrible consequences. Over the past decade, however, the *number* of such conflicts has declined substantially. While the United States and Europe have not done all they could to resolve these clashes, it is their interventions, peacekeeping, and commitment to negotiations that, more than any other factor, have contributed to peace.

As for racism, it is precisely those countries that came under the most relentless criticism at Durban that have made the most progress in eliminating legal barriers to equality, purging their institutions of discrimination, and isolating racial extremists. This is not even to speak of the "racist" state of Israel, which by any definition happens to be one of the world's most successful multiracial societies. At Durban, however, democracy's ability to evolve and accommodate the coexistence of peoples of differing races and cultures was hardly mentioned.

What we witnessed instead was a rejection of the democratic idea itself as morally or politically superior to systems of oppression. This was, after all, a forum where the foreign minister of South Africa could describe Cuba as the "most democratic country in the world," where Fidel Castro was treated as a hero, and where American political representatives, some of whom were elected because of policies designed to expand opportunities for racial minorities, attacked their own country as racist.

The conference's omissions in this regard are worth noting. As the delegates assembled in Durban, Afghanistan's Taliban leaders were placing on trial foreign and Afghan relief workers for the crime of preaching Christianity. Robert Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe and a militant advocate of reparations, was spearheading a violent campaign to drive white farmers from their lands. Egypt was jailing intellectuals who spoke out against anti-Christian discrimination. Sudan's Muslim government was prosecuting a brutal war against Christians and animists in the country's southern region.

Nothing was said about these abuses, except for a few vague references criticizing the contemporary slave trade. Instead, the justice minister of Sudan was on hand to assure participants that in his country minority rights were guaranteed in conformity with international law. Although Paul Kagame, the president of Rwanda, was among a handful of heads of state in attendance, nothing was said of the genocidal tribal conflicts in his country either, except for a demand from the Organization of African Unity that the United States pay \$800 million for having failed to intervene to stop the killing.

Also ignored was another current African ethnic conflict, in Nigeria, where massacres have occurred in those provinces where Muslims have imposed Islamic law. No one thought to cite the mass expulsion of Asians from black African countries, a relatively recent occurrence. Nor did China's occupation of Tibet, as obvious an example of cultural

oppression as exists in the world, provoke the WCAR's concern. Having regularly used intimidation to deflect criticism of its human-rights record at UN forums, Beijing succeeded not only in keeping the Tibet question off the agenda but also in restricting to a handful the number of Tibetan human-rights advocates in attendance. It goes without saying that no one thought to mention the killing of Israeli Jews by terrorists trained by Osama bin Laden, crimes that clearly qualify as acts of religious and ethnic "xenophobia," to use the WCAR's term.

WHEN THE United States announced that a low-level delegation would be sent to Durban and then, subsequently, withdrew from the conference, it attracted the scorn of human-rights and civil-rights organizations, which accused Washington of yet again defying world opinion by acting unilaterally. In fact, America's withdrawal was one of the few principled acts in the whole grotesque affair.

To remain at Durban would have meant to engage in "negotiations" over whether the conference's final declaration described Israel as a genocidal apartheid regime or, as was eventually the case, singled out the Jewish state for condemnation in more temperate language. It would also have forced the United States to participate in a debate over wrongs done centuries ago—a debate deliberately framed to ensure the conviction of America and Europe for crimes against humanity. As for well-meaning suggestions that Secretary Powell attend Durban to showcase America's successes in promoting racial fairness, this proposition made sense only on the assumption that the participants were willing to hear such a message. The truth is that most had come to excoriate the United States, and were angry to have been deprived of that opportunity by Powell's absence.

Instead of asking whether the United States was justified in its withdrawal, one might pose a better

question: why did other democracies not join in the walkout? Although Canada (whose foreign minister was scathing in his comments), Australia, and several East European countries made clear their contempt for the WCAR, the European Union lent a measure of credibility to the proceedings by remaining to the bitter end. Although the Europeans deplored the anti-Semitic language in the official declaration, and worked to modify the final document, their principal concern was to ensure that the communiqué's wording on reparations was watered down to the point where it could not be cited to bolster future legal action. Having achieved this objective, they pronounced themselves satisfied with the results at Durban.

Which brings us back at last to the terrorist assault on the United States, an act that took place just three days after the conference concluded and in light of which the events at Durban pale into insignificance. But Durban does deserve to be remembered—not, as some would have it, as evidence that the world is unable to come to grips with prejudice and discrimination, but as an ideological prologue to September 11.

As delegates to the WCAR wrangled over whether Israel was guilty of war crimes and apartheid, terrorist acts were being planned or carried out by Palestinian groups with the objective of killing as many Jewish civilians in Israel as possible. By the standards established by the Durban conferees, these attacks constituted a form of racist murder. Yet not only was this not on the WCAR agenda, a critical mass of Durban participants privately applauded the suicide bombings taking place in Israel.

It is but a small step from cheering acts of terrorism against Israel to finding satisfaction in terrorism against Israel's ally, the United States. For this reason, Durban must be recorded not merely as a farce and a failure, but as an event whose message, whose achievements, and whose legacy are uniquely monstrous.

Reconsidering “Bush v. Gore”

Gary Rosen

INDIGNATION TOWARD the Supreme Court has been a defining feature of American conservatism since at least the early 1960's, when Chief Justice Earl Warren and his like-minded brethren launched the judicial “rights revolution” that has continued, more or less unabated, up to our own day. With each expansive new ruling over the years—on obscenity, school prayer, the death penalty, busing, abortion, and a host of equally inflammatory issues—conservatives have found fresh evidence of the Justices' disdain not only for the limits of their own office but, more gallingly, for the views of the American people and their elected representatives. In a controversial 1996 symposium, the religious journal *First Things* went so far as to wonder whether this “judicial usurpation of politics” should be seen as the “end” of American democracy.

Where this question stands now, in the wake of the extraordinary events that brought the 2000 presidential election to a close, is unclear. Judging by the many books published in the past year—and especially in the past several months—on the legal aspects of the dispute over the Florida vote, the Right is hardly alone any longer in entertaining serious doubts about the role that the courts play in our democracy, nor is the Left alone in discounting such concerns.

To be sure, as matters unfolded in Florida after

the vote on November 7, conservatives—or, to be more precise, the supporters of George W. Bush—saw their long-standing fears about the imperial judiciary confirmed yet again. In a series of remarkably freewheeling decisions, the Florida Supreme Court, invoking the “will of the people” to trump what it called “a hyper-technical reliance upon statutory provisions,” allowed or ordered manual recounts that were seemingly designed to give Al Gore every opportunity to overtake the slim official lead of his Republican rival. James Baker, Bush's chief spokesman in Florida, called it “a sad day for America and the Constitution when a court decides the outcome of an election.” For the conservative *Weekly Standard*, the Florida justices had become, as the magazine's cover declared, “Our Robed Masters.”

But within a matter of days the entire situation had been turned on its head, both politically and ideologically. In short order, the five-Justice conservative majority of the U.S. Supreme Court—William Rehnquist, Anthony Kennedy, Sandra Day O'Connor, Antonin Scalia, and Clarence Thomas—intervened first to impose a stay on the recount and then to reverse the Florida high court, thus barring any further effort to discover votes among the disputed ballots. The endless wrangling about hanging, dimpled, and pregnant chads was over, Bush was President-elect, and conservatives, who had spent weeks decrying the high-handed activism of judges, were elated.

GARY ROSEN is the managing editor of COMMENTARY and the author of *American Compact: James Madison and the Problem of Founding*.

Now it was the other side's turn to speak of a "stolen" election and to vent its fury at a purportedly out-of-control judiciary. Taking their cue from Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who omitted from her opinion the "respectfully" that customarily softens the concluding phrase "I dissent," liberal commentators denounced *Bush v. Gore* as a "travesty" (Mary McGrory in the *Washington Post*), a "scandal" (Randall Kennedy in the *American Prospect*), and a ruling that lacked any "credible explanation" (Anthony Lewis in the *New York Times*). The "four vain men and one vain woman" of the Court's majority were accused of having simply indulged their "self-interested political preferences" (Jeffrey Rosen in the *New Republic*), rendering a decision that was at once "illegitimate, undemocratic, and unprincipled" (Cass R. Sunstein in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*).¹ In a full-page ad in the *New York Times*, 554 law professors—"teachers whose lives," in their own words, "have been dedicated to the rule of law"—declared that by acting as "political partisans, not judges," the Justices had "tarnished" the legitimacy of the Court.

There was, of course, an element of almost comic irony in these full-throated denunciations, coming as they did from intellectual quarters that have long rationalized or celebrated the overreaching of the American judiciary. Such self-righteous critics should themselves have cleaner hands. But it is not enough to answer a charge of hypocrisy with a charge of hypocrisy. The fundamental question, with all that it portends for our constitutional politics, remains: were the Justices of the Supreme Court right or wrong to play the role they did in the 2000 presidential election?

FROM THE moment reporters were handed *Bush v. Gore* in the waning hours of December 12, it was apparent that the case had deeply divided the Court. The decision consisted of an almost unprecedented six distinct opinions: an unsigned "per curiam" ruling by all five conservative Justices, a concurrence by the three most conservative of them, and separate but overlapping dissents by each of the four liberal Justices—Stephen Breyer, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, David Souter, and John Paul Stevens.

The concurrence written by Chief Justice Rehnquist and joined by Justices Scalia and Thomas hinged on the issue of just how activist the rulings of the Florida justices had been. Though "comity and respect for federalism" would normally compel the Justices to defer to a state court's interpretation of state law, Rehnquist wrote, the Constitu-

tion did impose certain limits when it came to the procedures for presidential contests. In particular, Article II provides that the electors of each state are to be selected "in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct" (emphasis added in the opinion). Thus it was that the election laws devised by the Florida legislature took on an "independent significance," demanding a degree of deference that the state's highest court, in its various reworkings of that law, had failed to show. By the light of Article II, the Court's most reliably conservative troika held, the Florida justices had "impermissibly distorted" the intention of the state's lawmakers.

The actual judgment of the Court—the ruling that carried the force of law—lay, however, in entirely different constitutional precincts, in concerns about the "equal protection" guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. Here the conservative Justices, now including the more centrist Kennedy and O'Connor, formed a united front.

Where the Florida Supreme Court had run into constitutional trouble, the five Justices declared, was in ordering a recount whose lone instruction to election officials was to determine the "intent of the voter." In the absence of more specific standards, this open-ended rule had resulted in a range of abuses, with contested ballots treated differently not only "from county to county but indeed within a single county from one recount team to another." The mechanism set in motion by the Florida court failed, in short, to "satisfy the minimum [constitutional] requirement for non-arbitrary treatment of voters."²

Nor was there time, according to the Justices, to devise a new procedure, since the Florida legislature (at least in the estimation of the Florida court) had meant to protect the state's presidential vote from congressional challenge by taking advantage of the "safe harbor" provision of federal law, the deadline for which, as the decision was announced, was just minutes away. For the violations now before it, the Supreme Court concluded, the only available remedy was to bring the whole contentious process to a halt.

¹ For these and other opinion pieces written immediately after the key legal decisions in the Florida controversy (as well as for the decisions themselves), see *Bush v. Gore: The Court Cases and the Commentary*, edited by E.J. Dionne, Jr. and William Kristol (Brookings, 344 pp., \$15.95, paper).

² The majority found additional, if somewhat secondary, equal-protection problems in the Florida court's failure to include "overvotes" (ballots with more than one selection for President) in the statewide recount that it ordered, in its seeming indifference to whether those who would conduct the recount were adequately trained, and in its readiness to accept totals from incomplete county recounts.

FOR THEIR part, the liberal Justices were unanimous in rejecting the idea that the Florida high court had somehow usurped the role of the state legislature. The rulings of the Florida justices may have been flawed—"other interpretations were of course possible," Justice Souter observed, "and some might have been better than those [that were] adopted"—but they certainly fell within the bounds of permissible interpretation. Furthermore, Justice Stevens maintained, Article II did not "create state legislatures out of whole cloth, but rather takes them as they come—as creatures born of, and constrained by, their state constitutions," a circumstance that, in this case, gave the Florida Supreme Court broad powers of review.

More complicated was the response from this side of the Court to the majority's equal-protection claim. On this question the liberal Justices split. Ginsburg saw no evidence that the recount "would yield a result any less fair or precise" than the official count that preceded it. Stevens pointed to the danger of "too literal" an interpretation of constitutional principles; after all, he wrote, if the recount was suspect on equal-protection grounds, so too was Florida's entire election system, which left "to each county the determination of what balloting system to employ—despite enormous differences in accuracy."

Justices Breyer and Souter, by contrast, agreed that the conduct of the recount raised serious questions about the unequal treatment of similarly situated voters. But their agreement with the majority only went that far, and still left them very much in dissent. As Breyer stipulated at the outset, and as Souter echoed in his own opinion, "The Court was wrong to take this case."

Moreover, having taken it and found a violation of equal protection, the Court was obliged to send it back to Florida for resolution. As both Breyer and Souter stressed, six days remained until the electoral votes absolutely had to be cast on December 18—meeting the imminent "safe harbor" deadline, all four liberal Justices insisted, was not in fact required by Florida law—and the state's high court deserved a chance, however fleeting, to devise the uniform standards now demanded of it.

THE MOST curious feature of the reaction to *Bush v. Gore* among conservatives has been the widespread agreement on two seemingly contradictory propositions: first, that the majority's decision was a necessary vindication of the rule of law; second, that the equal-protection analysis upon which it relied was entirely unpersuasive. Thus,

for Richard Lowry, the editor of *National Review*, the Supreme Court "had little choice but to overturn the Florida court," though the "reasoning in its hasty per-curiam decision was so shabby, one can only conclude that the Court did the right thing for the wrong reason." Robert H. Bork, writing in the *New Criterion*, also found "serious difficulties" with the Court's reliance on the equal-protection clause. As he (like Justice Stevens before him) pointed out, disparities like those in the Florida recount "have always existed within states under our semi-chaotic election processes." Nonetheless, Bork argued, the Justices could not permit "the stealing of a presidential election," even at the cost of an "inadequate majority opinion."

As a constitutional matter, what redeems *Bush v. Gore* in the eyes of Lowry, Bork, and most other conservative commentators is the concurring opinion of Justices Rehnquist, Scalia, and Thomas. Indeed, it is widely (and plausibly) assumed that the Court's three conservative stalwarts, having failed to persuade Justices Kennedy and O'Connor that the Florida court had violated Article II by rewriting the state's election laws, held their noses and accepted the egalitarian abstractions of what became the majority opinion. Either way, after all, the recount would be stopped.

That the concurrence had the better argument is hard to deny. As Richard A. Epstein of the University of Chicago and Michael W. McConnell of the University of Utah make clear in their separate contributions to *The Vote: Bush, Gore, and the Supreme Court*,³ a useful collection of essays by legal academics on both sides of the controversy, the "interpretations" of the Florida Supreme Court went far beyond what was required to make sense of the sometimes ambiguous or conflicting provisions of the state's election code.

In the fateful first stage of the litigation, the Florida justices transformed a portion of the law concerned with rectifying "an error in the vote tabulation"—a transparent reference to problems with the counting *machinery*—into a mandate to correct errors committed by *voters* in the casting of their votes. For good measure, they also ignored a straightforward statutory deadline for certifying vote tallies and replaced it with a much later cut-off date entirely of their own making, thus throwing into disarray the whole process for mounting a challenge to the election results.

In the second stage of the litigation (and largely to compensate for their earlier errors), the Florida

³ Edited by Cass R. Sunstein and Richard A. Epstein. University of Chicago Press, 266 pp., \$18.00 (paper).

justices went still farther down the road of arrogation, ordering a statewide recount of all “undervoted” ballots under the direction of a single circuit judge—an action neither contemplated by state law nor requested by Gore or Bush. In all of these proceedings, the basic effect of the court’s rulings was the same: to annul the far-reaching discretionary authority of the county and state officials to whom Florida law explicitly assigns the supervision of elections.

THIS MUCH ground and considerably more are covered by Richard A. Posner in *Breaking the Deadlock: The 2000 Election, the Constitution, and the Courts*,⁴ the only book-length defense of the ruling in *Bush v. Gore* yet to appear. For Posner—a federal appeals court judge, lecturer in law at the University of Chicago, and perhaps the country’s widest-ranging and most prolific legal thinker—it is not enough to demonstrate that the Florida court went badly astray, “butchering” the state’s election laws in violation of Article II. As he argues, with characteristic verve and intelligence, there are still deeper justifications for the Supreme Court’s intervention.

Posner concedes that more Florida voters probably set out to support Al Gore than George W. Bush, and that the wider availability of user-friendly voting technology would very likely have sent the Democratic candidate to the White House. But this, he insists, is no defense for what the Florida Supreme Court did. In our representative democracy, with its concern for order and stability, an election is “a formal procedure, a statutory artifact,” not “a public-opinion poll.” What matters is not some inchoate “general will,” à la Rousseau, but votes, and what constitutes a vote is determined by preestablished rules. By promulgating its own rules after the fact, Posner argues, the Florida court was not perfecting the democratic system, as many have claimed, but undermining one of its fundamental pillars: that succession take place according to procedures that are “fixed in advance, objective, administrable, and clear.”

In a similar vein, Posner dismisses those who think that the Supreme Court should ultimately have remanded the case to Florida, allowing the state courts and legislature to resolve the election dispute. Florida *was* entitled to six more days, he acknowledges, but “a responsible recount could not have been concluded by then.” In fact, the whole mess, with rival slates of Florida electors, would soon have found its way to the divided halls of Congress, where it would have led to paralyzing

chaos. With a new President still unnamed by inauguration day, Posner somewhat fancifully suggests, the office would have passed down the line of executive succession until coming to rest, for various reasons, on then-Secretary of the Treasury Lawrence Summers—thus making him our first Jewish President! “Eventually, with the nation’s patience completely exhausted,” he writes, either Bush or Gore would have prevailed in the House of Representatives, but his presidency “would have started behind the eight ball, with an irregular and disputed accession, an abbreviated term of office, and no transition.”

For Posner, these “pragmatic” concerns are paramount in evaluating *Bush v. Gore*, and form what he considers its “hidden ground.” As he concludes, the majority’s decision may have “damaged the Court’s prestige, at least in the short run; but it did not do so gratuitously—it averted a potential crisis.”

THERE IS much to be said for these exercises in apologetics. As its defenders have rightly stressed, *Bush v. Gore*, whatever the defects of the ruling, did bring an orderly conclusion to an unsettling chapter in our national politics, and it did so, at least in part, on the basis of a credible argument about the Constitution’s Article II.

In these crucial respects, the Supreme Court’s election-ending decision is not, as some of its critics have suggested, the ideological mirror image of *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 abortion decision that has become synonymous with liberal judicial activism. As many liberals themselves are now willing to admit, the ruling in *Roe* was essentially a piece of judicial legislation, with no grounding in constitutional text or history. More important perhaps, the abortion decision, with its cavalier dismissal of how the states themselves wished to resolve the issue, continues to roil our politics even now, some 30 years after it was handed down—a marked contrast to the quiet that, outside the law schools, quickly descended over *Bush v. Gore*.

Still, in at least one key regard, the comparison to *Roe* is not favorable to the present Supreme Court. Say what one will about the authors of the abortion decision, their reasoning in the case, such as it was, was not a surprise; it followed their own activist precedents with respect to the so-called “right of privacy,” and it reflected a judicial temperament that they had displayed many times before. In *Bush v. Gore*, by contrast, the five conservative Justices performed what can only be described

⁴ Princeton University Press, 266 pp., \$24.95.

as an ideological somersault, embracing an equal-protection claim that was not only unpersuasive on its own terms but irreconcilable with the basic tenets of their judicial philosophy.

THIS IS the burden of Alan M. Dershowitz's instructive if at times intemperate and wrong-headed book, *Supreme Injustice: How the High Court Hijacked Election 2000*.⁵ For Dershowitz—a professor at Harvard Law School who, when not himself taking part in the Florida litigation, was busily offering his opinions on it to any and all media takers—the clearest indication of the Justices' culpability is what he calls "the-shoe-on-the-other-foot test." As he sees it, "they would not have stopped a hand recount if George W. Bush had been seeking it." Acting as partisans, they sought a political end without regard to the ideological means.

In support of this claim, Dershowitz puts together a damning compilation of the conservative Justices' previous rulings and statements on the question of equal protection. All of these reveal, as anyone familiar with their views would expect, a profound reluctance to assign the idea anything like the sweeping effect they gave to it in the Florida case. Typical of the excerpts is this, from an opinion by Justice Rehnquist:

In providing the Court with the duty of enforcing such generalities as the equal-protection clause, the framers of the Civil War amendments placed it in the position of Adam in the Garden of Eden. As members of a tripartite institution of government which is responsible to no constituency, and which is held back only by its own sense of self-restraint . . . we are constantly subjected to the human temptation to hold that any law containing a number of imperfections denies equal protection simply because those who drafted it could have made it a fairer or a better law.

And this, from Justice Thomas:

The equal-protection clause shields only against purposeful discrimination: a disparate impact, even upon members of a racial minority, . . . does not violate equal protection. . . . [W]e have regularly required more of an equal-protection claimant than a showing that state action has a harsher effect on him or her than on others.

As Dershowitz writes, the "glaring and dramatic inconsistencies" between these earlier opinions and the Florida ruling strike at "the core of everything these Justices have stood for over many years."

Nor have the more clear-eyed members of the Left, despite their condemnation of the decision, failed to see the opportunity presented by the conservative Justices' epiphany on the meaning of equal protection. In the *Nation*, the historian Eric Foner found a "silver lining" in the Court's having "opened the door to challenging our highly inequitable system of voting." Harvard Law School's Lani Guinier, writing in the *New York Times*, invoked the decision to renew her call for dispensing with winner-take-all legislative districts and moving to a system of proportional representation, since the Court had been explicit in "valuing no person's vote over another."

Indeed, taken to its logical conclusion, the notion of equal protection affirmed by the Court in *Bush v. Gore* would draw into question virtually every aspect of the country's locally run, state-administered, and highly decentralized electoral system—a point that the conservative Justices themselves, confronted by a different set of litigants, could have been counted on to make. This may explain what is perhaps the most objectionable part of the majority's opinion. As if to confess their bad faith, the Justices announced toward the end of the decision that they were not, in fact, playing for keeps. Because "the problem of equal protection in election processes generally presents many complexities," they wrote, "our consideration is limited to the present circumstances."

Alongside this extraordinary disavowal, Alan Dershowitz places the following passage from a 1996 opinion by Justice Scalia, in which the Court's most articulate conservative aptly described the institution's proper role:

The Supreme Court of the United States does not sit to announce "unique" dispositions. Its principal function is to establish precedent—that is, to set forth principles of law that every court in America must follow. As we said only this term, we expect both ourselves and lower courts to adhere to the "rationale upon which the Court based the results of its earlier decisions" That is the principal reason we publish our opinions.

NO LESS disturbing as a matter of judicial philosophy—and seeming partisan favoritism—was the Supreme Court's obvious unwillingness to let the election dispute work itself out in Florida or, if need be, in Congress. If judicial self-restraint means anything, it is that the Justices should re-

⁵ Oxford University Press, 275 pp., \$25.00.

spect the prerogatives of the other branches of the state and federal governments, especially with regard to those “political questions,” as they are known in legal circles, that do not clearly fall within the Court’s institutional competence and would needlessly involve it in partisan controversy. In such instances, the Justices should exercise what the legal scholar Alexander Bickel called, in his classic formulation, the “passive virtues.”

In the Florida case, this would have required, at a minimum, letting the state’s high court try to remedy the (supposed) violation of equal protection in its recount standards. Would this have resulted in the political chaos predicted with such flair by Richard Posner? Perhaps. But as he himself grants (and as other commentators on both sides of the political aisle have agreed), the “likeliest outcome of the remand that Justices Souter and Breyer wanted would have been abandonment of the recount when it became clear that it could not be completed, subject to appropriate judicial review, by December 18.” Under this scenario, Bush would still have won—but his victory would not have been tainted by the preemptory action of the Court.

More fundamentally, there is the question of whether the Supreme Court should have taken any action at all in the Florida dispute. Even the better argument made by the conservative Justices, based on Article II, was, for all its force, without precedent. There can be no doubt that the intentions of the Florida legislature had been perverted, but this alone did not compel the Court to take the case or to find an infraction of the Constitution, and concerns about federalism might well have counseled restraint. Moreover, in light of the potential conflicts of interest involved—with candidate Bush having repeatedly declared his admiration for Scalia and Thomas and the Justices themselves having an obvious stake in who might be appointed to join them in the future—the Court would perhaps have been well advised, in effect, to recuse itself.

Had this happened, we now know, Bush would almost certainly have retained his lead. As recounts conducted after the election at the behest of news organizations have shown, even the more open-ended counting standards advocated by Democrats and accepted by the Florida court would not have provided enough votes to put Gore ahead. Bush would have made it to the White House on his own.

Needless to say, the Justices of the Supreme Court had no way of knowing this as they considered whether to intervene (nor should it have mattered, if their concerns were exclusively of the constitutional variety). What they did know—and what should have

furnished the strongest argument for holding back—was that, under both the Constitution and federal law, it was the duty of other, more democratically accountable institutions to safeguard the integrity of the presidential election. The Florida legislature was prepared to act, and so too was Congress, if disagreement among the branches of the state government had resulted in the naming of separate Republican and Democratic slates of electors.

Had it come to this, the scene on Capitol Hill would certainly have been partisan, and perhaps even ugly. But as we learned from the impeachment proceedings against President Clinton (and as we have had occasion to see again in the wake of the terrorist attack on September 11), our politicians are capable during times of crisis of conducting themselves with the necessary sobriety and seriousness of purpose. Though Posner is probably correct that “whatever Congress did would have been regarded as the product of raw politics,” the same has been said, with some reason, about the Court’s settling of the Florida case—and politics is not supposed to be the Court’s business.

Why this should be so was well stated more than a century ago by the sponsor of the Electoral Count Act, the law under which Congress would have considered the Florida dispute. As Senator John Sherman noted in introducing the measure—a belated response to the fiasco surrounding the Hayes-Tilden presidential contest of 1876—some members of Congress had wished to involve the Supreme Court in the process.

But there is a feeling in this country that we ought not to mingle our great judicial tribunal with political questions, and therefore this proposition has not met with much favor. It would be a very grave fault indeed and a very serious objection to refer a political question in which the people of the country were aroused, about which their feelings were excited, to this great tribunal, which after all has to sit upon the life and property of all the people of the United States. It would tend to bring that court into public odium of one or the other of the two great parties.

NATURALLY ENOUGH, much of the bitterness arising from the 2000 election has since evaporated, especially as the country has turned of late to decidedly more urgent matters. But American political life will gradually revert to something like its former state, and when it does, it is unlikely in the aftermath of *Bush v. Gore* that either of the

"great parties" will see the Supreme Court in the same light.

The Democratic party, of course, has never been well disposed to the Court's current majority, and has fought energetically—often unfairly—to keep other conservative judges off the bench. But the critique of the conservative Justices has previously been ideological; their ideas were "extremist," their view of the Constitution unacceptably narrow. Now, as never before, liberals have at their disposal the argument that has long served as a rallying cry for conservative critics of the Warren and Burger Courts: that the Justices are not just mistaken but, in some sense, corrupt, having forgotten the limits of their office.

Perhaps more profound may be the effect on Republicans and conservatives, who, one suspects, will find it difficult to continue avowing their old judicial principles with a straight face. Phrases like

"judicial restraint" and "strict construction" may not sound the same for some time. Conservatives will thus be hampered in resisting what may be, in due course, the Left's dominant reaction to *Bush v. Gore*: not second thoughts about its own history of judicial activism, but a renewed commitment to using the courts as an engine of social change. After all, if the judicial gloves are off, they are off for everyone.

The great shame in all this is that the 2000 election might have turned out very differently for the U.S. Supreme Court and our constitutional politics. Given the opportunity to decide who would be President, the conservative Justices, in the service of long-held principle, might have done what members of the high court have always found it difficult to do in the face of society's most pressing concerns and their own strongly held preferences: they might have passed.

My Little Marjie

A Story

Joseph Epstein

WHEN MY brother was born my mother, phoning from her room at Michael Reese Hospital, asked what name I would like to give him. I was five years old. "Spencer," I said without hesitation, thinking of a skinny redhead, a neighbor of ours on Sheridan Road, who must have been fourteen or fifteen at the time and had always gone out of his way to be kind to me. Spencer my little brother became, and that is the pretentious and slightly comical name he would have dragged through life had he not succumbed to crib death at the age of six months.

Such was the shock of this event that my mother waited a full six years before having her third child, my little sister. Again she consulted me. "Marge," I volunteered: after another redhead, one of my mother's dearest friends, a tall and freckled and (though I wasn't aware of it) somewhat tragic figure.

Marge Lederer played cards with my mother: poker and Kalooky and Canasta. She never married but went around for nearly 30 years with a heavy-set, gruff Irishman named Fred White who, the story was, had been unable to obtain a divorce from his very Catholic wife. Marge worked as a book-keeper for a liquor store in the Loop and smoked

Pall Malls, on which she would invariably leave a firm lipstick imprint. She used to say that I was going to be a heartbreaker when I grew up. Things turned out quite the reverse, but she won *my* heart with her sweetness and the tinge of sadness I sensed in this large and lonely woman. She died of cancer.

My baby sister and I connected immediately. She would reach up to grasp my finger as I hovered over her crib, while I, lightly touching her stomach and babbling her name, could almost unfailingly make her smile. If our mother could not calm her, I could sometimes do the job just by taking her in my arms and patting her back. Although I was in every other respect a perfectly normal eleven-year-old boy—an athlete, a reader of comic books—I found myself spending an abnormal amount of time standing over her crib as she slept, handing her toys in her playpen, or, later, taking her for walks around the block in her stroller and playing with her on the grass in our small backyard. I can even remember leaning over my sister's crib at night and praying that no harm ever come to her.

Marjorie had our mother's good looks, her deep brown eyes and dark brown hair. There was a fineness about her face: high cheekbones, a small but somehow not disappointing nose, good teeth, a winning smile. Her fingers were long, her hands well formed. Everything about her suggested high intelligence. In my memory—this can't, I realize, be accurate—she began speaking in full sentences.

JOSEPH EPSTEIN, *the author of ten books of essays and a collection of short stories, is a longtime contributor to COMMENTARY. His new book, Snobbery, The American Version, will be published next year by Houghton Mifflin.*

Before she was two, she had picked up on humor, knew what was expected of her, and was expert at manipulating others, not least me.

I wasn't sure what I wanted for my baby sister—except, in a vague way, a grand life lived on a high plane. I know I worried about her becoming too popular. I wanted her to have in her social arsenal the power to charm, but never to waste it by using it indiscriminately. Perhaps even then I was afraid of losing her some day—though God knows there was little enough sign of that. On the contrary, as she grew older Marjorie came to think of me not only as her brother but as her adviser and protector. One of her first words was “Bruddy,” short for brother, and Bruddy she called me ever after. “Bruddy”—I had only to hear the word to come running.

BY THE time Marjorie was in high school I was twenty-six, a graduate of the University of Chicago, my two years in the Army over and done with. As I came of age I began to offer my little sister a fair amount of advice. A mild Francophile headed for a university career, I made sure she studied high-school French, which she did with great efficiency, and in particular I put her on to the novels of Stendhal. I never told her why, but I was sure she would absorb their chief point—namely, that men, with their ambitions and romantic conceptions of themselves, are essentially clownish figures, never to be taken at their own self-valuation and predictably beastly in their use of women to bolster their always shaky egos.

At seventeen, Marjorie was tallish (5'7" or so), but she had never gone through anything like an awkward phase, and already it was clear she was going to be a knockout. She graduated ninth in a class of 500-odd students at Mather High and had her choice of colleges. I was against the University of Chicago; good as it was, the school seemed too dark and dreary for her. In the spring of her junior year I took a week off and drove her around to the eastern schools. Harvard, Yale, Princeton were not yet coeducational. Vassar was too isolated; Bennington, despite the beautiful setting, too much the breeding ground of female neurosis. Between us we decided on Wellesley. The main point, I told her, was that she attend a school that the world reckoned good; although she would quickly enough discover otherwise, at least, later in life, she wouldn't wonder how things might have turned out if only she had gone to a supposedly good school. My father, less than eager to send his daughter so far away, succumbed to my argument

that Boston represented a larger world than Chicago.

At Wellesley, whatever the reigning system of snobberies, she not only survived but flourished, graduating *summa cum laude* with a combined major in French literature and modern history. Her senior honors essay on Marcel Proust and the Dreyfus affair, a paper of some 70 pages, showed, I thought, an orderly, lucid, and well-stocked mind, especially for one so young. As a teacher by then in the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago, I knew a thing or two about Proust myself, and I felt my baby sister had insinuated herself impressively into that little genius's richly textured and ultimately heroic mind.

So, apparently, did others. Her teachers in the French department at Wellesley urged her to attend graduate school, assuring her that a graduate fellowship at Harvard or Yale was a certainty.

“What do you think, Bruddy?” she phoned to ask me.

“Baby,” I said, “I think you need a bigger playing field than any university can provide.”

“I was hoping you'd say that.”

“Great minds think alike, no?”

“Ours seem to.”

Through a Wellesley connection, Marjie was offered and took a job at *Vogue*. It was 1969 and the magazine still wasn't hiring many Jewish girls, but for my sister they made an exception. Called an editorial assistant, she became in fact a woman of all work: proofreading, writing captions, turning out small gossip bits, occasionally going on photo shoots. She reported back to me on the wild comedy of life under Diana Vreeland. “She's a genuine *monstre sacré*, Bruddy,” she said, “most of the time without the *sacré*.”

Marjie shared an apartment in the Village with an Irish girl who had gone to Smith and who also worked at *Vogue*. The only men in her life, so far as I knew, were a third-year law student at Columbia named Jonathan Kahn and Allan Greenberg, an assistant professor of English at NYU. Once, on a trip to New York, I took Marjie to dinner and Allan met us for drinks afterward. He was clearly more taken with her than she with him. I thought him nice enough but dull, not a serious contender.

I RECOGNIZED that my solicitude for Marjie was above and beyond the ordinary. But then I tended to think of the two of us as above and beyond the ordinary in every way. I was intent on protecting her, even if I knew that I could do so only within very strict limits; I was intent, too, on

her happiness, even if the limits here were greater still. What I hoped—was this naïve?—was that at least I could steer her away from life's obvious mistakes and traps.

Not long after leaving school, I myself had begun keeping company with a dazzling woman named Sally Maddox, blonde, green-eyed, bosomy, long-legged, the works. At first I thought myself privileged to be with so desirable a creature; later I started to feel edgy. Returning from the men's room in a restaurant or bar, I would discover guys had sent her notes or come up to the table to pitch her directly. Walking down the street, I would register the look in the eyes of the men we passed; even male dogs, I began to think, were stimulated by her. Unable to stand the pressure, I abandoned the field.

But a sister you don't abandon. Marjie was a Sally Maddox—but for men of taste and sensibility. She had always been beautiful; now, entering upon womanhood, she became sexy. A certain luscious ripeness about her caused men to stare as she walked past, then to do a double-take, as if to say, "Did I just see what I think I saw?" The rather intimidating intelligence in her eyes, her natural refinement, would be enough, I felt sure, to put off most waiters, bartenders, and parking-lot attendants; also, most jocks and construction workers. But that still left a fairly full roster of potential predators.

In our conversations, Marjie and I always kept a nice balance between frankness and tact. We could be entirely candid talking about other people, including our parents, or about money or politics. But in the realm of sex, diffidence had been the rule. Throughout her high-school years there was generally some boy or other to take her to dances or to the movies, but no steady boyfriend. I assumed that my baby sister had gone off to college a virgin. At least it pleased me to think so—I speak here as a male of my generation, for whom sex, never a trivial act, was all the more desired for the prohibitions hedging it about and the dangers it entailed, including the dangers of pregnancy and, for a young woman, loss of reputation. I was on the old program, and in some ways still am.

What sort of man did I want for my little sister? I had in mind a man of the world, settled in his vocation, certain in his integrity, strong and serious. I preferred someone perhaps ten or so years older than she, someone whose work opened the world at a wide angle—in high finance, say, or diplomacy, or international law. And I wanted someone for whom the problems of money were already well

settled, who could give my talented baby sister the best chance to flourish at whatever it was that she eventually decided she wanted to do with her life.

What Marjie wanted to do was not yet certain. Opportunities opened before her, as they inevitably will for that small minority of women who are both strikingly beautiful and very smart. She was offered a job as a sub-editor at the *New Yorker*, another in the antique-furniture section at Sotheby's. She took the Sotheby's offer, which paid less, at least at first, but seemed to provide greater prospects. These included living in London, where the firm sent her for six months to learn the trade, putting her up in a small apartment on Marylebone near the Wallace Collection.

When I visited her there, I was amazed to see how cosmopolitan my baby sister had become. Taking me in hand, she made me feel very much the country mouse as she arranged tables for us at elegant restaurants set back in mews in parts of the city utterly unknown to me. On one of these occasions we were joined by an attractive young guy named Paul Lester, a Balliol man who worked for the BBC. He had an upper-class accent and strong left-wing opinions, and was clearly nuts about my sister. She seemed—appealingly, in my view—considerate but ultimately indifferent. If, as I believed, there was always an inequality in love, my sister was likely always to be the more loved party. The thought gave me a certain pleasure.

SOOTHEY'S SENT Marjie on two-month tours of its Paris and Rome offices before returning her to New York. There she settled in again easily enough, and soon became what I think of as a naturalized New Yorker. Although I was frustrated in my desire to have her near me, she did come back to Chicago at least twice a year: once for our father's birthday, which was on Christmas day, and once in the spring for Passover. And when I made my few trips each year to New York, we always saved at least one meal to be alone together, usually in her neighborhood on the Upper East Side where she would invariably know a quiet restaurant with splendid, no-nonsense food.

We always found things to talk about: books, movies, intellectual celebrities, our earnings, our expenses—everything but what, in another time, would have been called Marjie's love life. Once, however, planning a one-day visit to New York on which my evening would be spoken for, I called to ask if she could set aside lunch, and she told me there was someone she very much wanted me to meet.

"His name is James Newbolt," she said.

At first I didn't recognize the name, but then I did, though barely. Newbolt was a sculptor, an abstract expressionist of the generation of the New York School. His work had been overshadowed by David Smith's, or so I learned when I asked a friend on the Committee who knew the intricacies of the New York art world. My friend told me, too, that the sculpture of James Newbolt could no longer be considered contemporary; it had slipped from the contemporary to the modern—which is to say, to the historical.

Newbolt turned out to be himself rather historical. We met for lunch at a small French restaurant. I had arrived first. Ten minutes later, I saw my lovely sister enter, accompanied by a tall, very thin man, bald, with steel-rimmed spectacles. When I say tall, I mean 6'5" or more; his slenderness made him seem even taller. A stiff leg gave him a pronounced limp. He had to be a man near seventy. Marjie was not yet thirty.

In the time I had had to do a bit of research, I had discovered that James Newbolt was a New Englander, sufficiently well-born to be called a scion. He used to run with Jackson Pollock and Larry Rivers, was part of that hard-drinking crowd. Although I had never met any of the artists in this group, I had known the art critics Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg, who were themselves fairly tough characters, intellectual bullies really. It was altogether a tough bunch, tough on one another and tough on the rest of the world. The thought of my sister falling among such tigers was not easy to contemplate.

Newbolt, who had been married three times, worked chiefly in steel, and made vast, angular, abstract pieces carrying jazz-song titles like *Stars Fell on Alabama* and *Softly, Like A Morning Sunrise*. I gathered his critical reputation was now high and, with David Smith dead, rising. In a brief comment, Clement Greenberg had referred to Newbolt's "unvarying allegiance to a chaste, immitigable, unforgiving modernism," four highly approbative words.

MARJIE INTRODUCED us, and Newbolt shook my hand in a loose, negligent way. His brown tweed suit was worn, he wore a chambray work shirt and a black knit tie; the right temple of his glasses was held together with scotch tape, and one of his lower front teeth was missing. His nails were gray, the skin around them gritty—not so surprising, I suppose, in a man working with heavy metal. The first two fingers on each hand were or-

ange, from smoking: Camels, unfiltered, and lots of them, to judge by his gravelly voice and the half-pack or so he sucked down at lunch. My mind involuntarily flicked on a quick slide of those hands on my dear sister's body, causing an inward shudder.

Newbolt wasn't much given to small talk; there wasn't much give to him generally. He kept silent as I filled Marjie in on Chicago doings: marriages and divorces among our cousins, the health of our father, who was recovering from the still relatively new procedure of bypass surgery. Newbolt ordered a second martini before we picked up our menus.

After we ordered, he turned to me. "Marjorie gave me some of your stuff to read," he said. "It ain't much."

I wasn't expecting him to come on so strong so quickly. "How so?" I managed.

"It doesn't do much to advance the argument."

"Sorry to hear that," I said, trying not to seem daunted. "Tell me, what is the argument?"

"The argument is about the way people ought to live in a time of heightened spiritual crisis. Nothing of yours I've read even touches on that."

"What do your sculptures have to do with it?"

"If you don't see it, then there's no point in my spelling it out for you," he said.

With that for starters, the rest of the meal went cold and sour before us. Poor Marjie, try though she might, could find no way to save it.

"Jim knew Edmund Wilson, Bruddy," she offered, knowing my admiration for the great literary critic. "He went to the same prep school, though of course much later. The Hill School, wasn't it, Jimmy?"

"Yeah," he said, "I met him a few times. A non-stop talker. A monologist. He always had to show you he knew more than you did about your own life's work. An arrogant bastard, for my money."

"Jim," she tried again, "tell Bruddy about Ravel. Bruddy loves everything about Ravel."

"An amazing little guy, really. Very small, very elegant, a dandy. As an artist, he claimed to have gotten more out of joy than out of suffering. I don't think it's true, but when he said it you tended to believe it."

"There's a remark of Ravel's that has always impressed me," I put in. "Someone once accused him of being artificial. He said that his accuser didn't seem to realize that some people—meaning himself, I assume—were naturally artificial." And here I couldn't resist a dig at this creep. "It also works if you turn it around: some people are artificially natural."

Newbolt ordered a third martini, the drinking of which sent him into a sullen silence. There followed oysters and a lobster salad, at both of which he picked while downing two German beers. While Marjie and I had dessert, he went for a Drambuie, double. Just as the check arrived he ducked into the men's room. I looked at my sister, who looked away as I took out my wallet.

THE NEXT evening, Marjie called me in Chicago. "I'm so sorry about lunch, Bruddy," she said. "You didn't see Jimmy at his best."

"I assume he can do better, or he wouldn't still be alive. What's the matter with him, anyway?"

"I'm afraid," she said, "that he isn't very comfortable around Jews."

A long and awkward silence, which I was prepared to maintain for five minutes.

"I mean, Bruddy," she said at last, "he grew up in New England with shabby gentry, lots of pretensions, knowing no Jews at all. Then, when he came to New York, he felt the Jewish critics held him back. He still bears a grudge."

"But what about you, sweetie? You aren't exactly a Plantagenet."

"He makes an exception for me. He loves me."

"Why do you suppose that is? Maybe you help advance the argument."

"Bruddy," she said, "that isn't fair."

"What do you see in him? I don't get it."

"He's an artist, Bruddy, the real thing. Maybe a genius. And he seems to need me."

"Don't overrate art, Marjie," I said. "And especially don't overrate artists. It's all very well for the small number lucky enough to produce the real thing, but people who give their lives to artists usually come out with the short end of a very dirty stick."

It's not as if I didn't understand the special pleasure that comes from being singled out for the affection of an artist—being chosen by someone who himself seems chosen. But was this all there was to her infatuation for James Newbolt, who seemed a serious candidate for the most unappealing man I'd ever met? Was my sister telling me everything I needed to know?

Some women, of course, are stimulated by worthlessness, or have convinced themselves that theirs is the magic that will transform every toad into a prince. My sister wasn't so foolish as that. Nor, in keeping company with a man nearly 40 years older, was she seeking a father. She already had a good, sturdy, philistine father, the recognition of whose limitations never got in the way of her loving him.

But if I could not yet fathom what sort of fantasy was operating here, the question that interested me even more was how I could get her to cut away from this son of a bitch without pushing her further into his arms. In my twenties, I remember sitting toward the back of a Michigan Avenue bus on a steamy summer's day, coming in as an eavesdropper in the middle of a conversation between a mother and her adolescent daughter seated just ahead of me. I shall never forget the mother's strong *Mittel*-European accent as she said, "Sondra, lissen to me and you vill always treeumph"—or the sensation, upon hearing it, of a high heel being placed firmly on my adam's apple.

But, since her adolescence, had I not been playing with Marjie exactly the part of Sondra's mother? Our parents, proud though they were of their daughter, also not so secretly thought that my ambitions for her were, as my father more than once put it, "hifalutin." My own two failed and fallow marriages did not give them much confidence in my judgment. They would have much preferred Marjie to stay in Chicago and marry what they called a professional man: a physician or dentist or CPA (although not a lawyer, a species against whom my father harbored a longstanding animus). It was precisely from this fate that I had determined to set Marjie free. If only she would listen to me, follow my instructions on how to live her life, she would emerge triumphant. And so far, owing in large part to her own talent and good looks, she appeared to be well on her way—until now. I had set her free, all right: free, it had begun to appear, for James Newbolt.

Marjie and I talked at least twice a week, on Wednesday and Sunday nights, usually around ten. In our next conversation, I asked if it was all right to return to the Newbolt question.

"What, precisely, is the question, Bruddy?" I could feel a slight tensing in her voice.

"I guess it's, why *him*? What do you see in him?"

"One of the things I love about you, Bruddy, is your relentlessness when it comes to motives. Does every act really have to have a motive?"

"For people like us it does, baby sister. If we don't understand what the motive is, we might as well be in the mail-order business."

"Is love a motive, Brud?"

"Is that really what we're talking about here? You feel love for James Newbolt? Or are you only swept away by his proclaimed love for you?"

"When you say his name, could you please try to restrain the industrial-strength contempt?" she said.

"Sorry, but you two aren't a conventional couple, as I'm sure you've noticed."

"I thought avoiding convention was one of your chief lessons to me, Bruddy."

"Sweetie, this guy is 40 years older than you. I'm not saying anything about his drinking habits or his views on the Jewish question. But if you marry him and he lives long enough, you'll wipe the drool from his jaw, push his wheelchair down the boardwalk, change his diapers. That's a little beyond unconventional. Forgive me, but I think you're making a really major mistake, a horrendous mistake."

"Sorry, Bruddy, but I happen to think otherwise. If you must know, I think Jimmy's a genius and I take his love for me as a tribute."

"Genius?"

"Have you ever seen his work?"

"Only in photographs."

"Jim has a show right now at the Milwaukee Museum of Art. Before you say anything more, please run up there. Then maybe you'll know more about why I feel about him as I do."

I WAS perfectly prepared to despise everything that Newbolt had constructed, hoping to find a coarse and crappy life mirrored in his work. But once in the museum's sculpture garden—many of his pieces were too large to be shown indoors—I found myself deeply moved by a few of these cold but impressively suggestive works, awed by the monumentality of others, and quite swept away by the cumulative effect. I must have stood for at least fifteen minutes admiring a Giacometti-like figure titled *Our Davey*, which despite its abstraction uncannily caught the effeminate arrogance of the elegant little *David* by Donatello that I had seen years ago in the Uffizi.

Who would have thought that the miserable James Newbolt had the power to charm? Maybe he really was a genius, I thought, reminding myself that one must never underestimate the secret powers of the artist—powers often capable of touching many lives other than his own.

"He's a considerable talent," I conceded to Marjie over the phone that evening, in what I hoped was a measured tone of voice. "No doubt about it. The real thing, just as you said. But then why should I doubt your word in such matters?"

"Oh, Bruddy, I knew your judgment would win out over your feelings."

"Actually, they coexist. He's a serious artist whom I don't want connected in any way with my sister."

"Then you haven't changed your mind?"

"No, baby, I haven't. Forgive me, but I can't."

"You trust my eye but not my heart."

"Marjie, he's not for you."

"Who is, Bruddy, who is for me?"

"Not James Newbolt—that much I know."

"Jimmy says you think the only one good enough for me is you, Bruddy. He says your feelings for me border on the incestuous."

"I'm not surprised to hear it. That whole generation is awash in cheap Freudianism. Tell him I said there's nothing wrong with incest, so long as you keep it in the family."

There was a short but significant pause—a beat, I think they call it in movie scripts.

"Bruddy," my sister said, "Jimmy and I were married in Maine on Friday."

"No, Marjie," I heard myself cry out. "Please God, no!"

"Bruddy," she said, "I want your blessing."

"I can't give it," I said. "I would like to, but I can't."

"I'll always love you," she said, "you know that."

"I know it," I said, "but this isn't the end I had in mind for you, warming the bones of this old boozier."

"Bruddy, he's my husband. Be careful."

"Don't you see you're writing the wrong ending to a brilliant life?"

"But, Bruddy," she said, strangely calm, "it's my life, it's my ending to write, not yours."

I didn't answer.

"Bruddy," she said, "I still want your blessing."

"Marjorie," I said, "forgive me but I can't—not now, not ever."

"Are you certain?"

"Of nothing more in my whole life."

I heard a gentle click on the other end.

THIS WAS the only argument my sister and I ever had. My parents never met Marjie's husband. As long as our parents were alive, she continued to visit Chicago, but now only once a year, on Passover; I always found an excuse to be out of town. My mother ceased talking about her in my presence. What, if anything, she and Marjie said about her marriage I never discovered. When my father asked me what Newbolt was like, I said that I had met him only once and hadn't gotten a very clear sense of him.

Another time, my father asked me to make things up with Marjorie. "It's not your place to sit *shiva* for her," he said. "She's your sister. Call her and make up." But I never did.

Our parents died without grandchildren. As the

years passed, whole days would go by without my thinking of Marjie; sometimes a whole week. I began to consider myself alone in the world, detached from family altogether. Then one day, more than two decades later, I returned after lunch to my office at the university to find a pink-slip message, "Call your brother-in-law." I was taken aback, not least by the thought that I had ever had a brother-in-law. The phone number on the message was somewhere in Maine.

"I've got bad news for you," Newbolt said.

You are bad news personified, I thought to myself.

"Your sister died last night, of bone cancer. It started as breast cancer."

"Dear God," I managed to blurt out. "Did she suffer much?"

"It wasn't easy," he said. "She's being cremated tomorrow."

"Did she mention me at any time?" I asked finally.

"Afraid not," he said. "She left no will. She wanted her ashes spread around the garden here."

"Thank you for calling," I said, and hung up, forgetting to ask him to send me something of my sister's, a piece of clothing, a photograph, a bit of costume jewelry, something to hold in my hand. She would have been fifty-two.

James Newbolt, so far as I know smoking and boozing at the same clip, died two years later, making it to ninety-one. His death was noted in a half-page obituary in the *New York Times*, with a picture of him in his studio and another of *Our Davey*. The *Times* mentioned his having been married four times, but no names of wives were given. An oversight, I guess.

OBSERVATIONS

War Comes to Williams

Michael J. Lewis

THERE WAS an odd comfort in watching the unfolding of a national disaster in the presence of video artists and photographers: one did not stand in paralyzed impotence. On September 11, the nearest television set at my college was in the video laboratory, and around me there swirled a reassuring bustle of purposeful and competent activity. One faculty colleague worked to hook up the recorder, another crouched and leaned to snap still photos from the television screens. Standing among them, as we watched the World Trade Center topple, I felt a palpable and unanticipated gregariousness, a concord of mood and feeling.

This sense of commonality barely outlasted the towers themselves. One of my younger colleagues, a woman who keeps an apartment in Brooklyn, turned to me, badly shaken, and said, "I have to do something about this in my class. I have

MICHAEL J. LEWIS is chairman of the art department at Williams College and the author of *Frank Furness: Architecture and the Violent Mind*. His "From Baubaus to Bilbao" appeared in our September issue.

to show them the video about the Japanese internment camps."

So much for collective mood. Why should the murder of thousands of men, women, and children, accomplished in an instant, concern us? Well, it turns out, because it might lead to something *really* serious, like civil-rights violations. (I was reminded of the old joke, which I understand is told about more than one religion: Why do Methodists frown on sexual intercourse in a standing position? Because it could lead to dancing.) But soon I found that my colleague's reaction, far from being an aberrant attitude expressed in a moment of confusion and shock, represented the common wisdom of our campus.

WILLIAMS HAS no great tradition of radical politics. A small liberal-arts college in the Berkshires of northwestern Massachusetts, usually counted among America's elite schools, it lacks the self-conscious progressivism of a place like Swarthmore. While its alumni are as diverse as George Steinbrenner, Stephen Sondheim, and William J. Bennett, they tend to be disciplined overachievers rather than fire-

brands. And although it is, after Harvard, the state's oldest institution of higher learning, its tradition is wholly different. When Harvard turned Unitarian at the time of Emerson, and became the crucible for two centuries of American radicalism, Williams remained stalwartly Congregationalist, a provincial factory for the grooming of ministers.

Isolation and small scale (about 2,100 students) have bred a pervasive culture of good manners and respect, and a distinct caution in the give-and-take of classroom debate. Williams students hesitate to challenge their professors, and do not like it if others do. When an unusually truculent student reproached one of my colleagues with the words, "you haven't justified yourself intellectually," his classmates intervened and apologized for his rudeness.

This ethos does not offer fertile ground for freewheeling debate, especially of the political sort, which requires a love of the sound of clashing ideas. In recent years, under the baton of political correctness, things have only gotten worse. The fear of uttering taboo words or

sentiments has come to cripple the debating instinct, driving genuine discussion underground or into intimate personal circles.

Clearly, however, some significant number of students tilt more conservatively than their professors. I recently took part in a gun-control debate here against Michael Dukakis, and my faculty colleagues were startled when our students voted for the right to bear arms. Typically, professors willing to champion conservative views—even for the sake of argument—are difficult to find, and even when found, there is no guarantee that they will not jump ship in mid-debate. That was the case this spring when Gary Bauer, former head of the Family Research Council, participated in a debate over President Bush's faith-based initiative. In rising to offer support, Bauer's designated teammate, a Williams professor, abruptly removed his jacket to reveal that he was dressed as Satan: he would speak, that is, as the "devil's advocate," challenging the views of his own, proper side. Even in formal public debate, it seems, conservatives need not be treated according to the rules.

Such, too, was the case at the college's first public event after the September 11 attack, a panel discussion hastily organized for the same evening. Four faculty members with expertise in the Middle East and U.S. foreign policy were invited to speak. I stayed away, vividly recalling a hysterical panel discussion at Bryn Mawr the day after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989; intended to calm worried students, it was about as reassuring as a group therapy session conducted by competing psychoanalysts from four different institutes.

The Williams event had a similar outcome, as anguished students later told me. Mentions of American culpability were greeted with vociferous acclaim, while the one professor who argued the case for principled retaliation drew loud hisses. The low point came when a visibly shaky female student said, "I

know that the U.S. is going to use this as an excuse to kill millions of people, like it always does."

One professor from the panel thought to challenge her: "Excuse me, but what is the evidence for that?"

"I *feel* it," she responded, to a general round of applause.

AFTER HEARING about this evening, I sent an e-mail message to a dozen of my students, asking their view of the general campus sentiment. Several assured me that there was a consensus among undergraduates for decisive military action; others, that there was a consensus against. What seemed to be true was that, already by the evening of the 11th, the campus had assumed well-defined, rigid contours: a strongly vocal party agitating against military action and a rather quieter group inclined to support some sort of proportionate military response. Since by the nature of things the latter group was in a passive position—waiting hopefully for government action—the former briskly and visibly set the agenda.

The focus of its activity was Baxter Hall, a rambling building that houses the student union. Here a number of display cases were given over to exhibits urging tolerance. A massive banner advocating "Justice through Global Peace" was erected in the mailroom, immediately drawing 400 signatures of support. A peace rally and a candlelight vigil were announced. By Thursday, handmade posters appeared around the campus proclaiming "God Bless our Ignorance"; they were affixed over photocopies of the *New York Post's* defiant headlines. Any student who yearned for a bracing American military response would have looked in vain for tangible signs that anyone shared his feelings.

By Friday morning, however, news spread of the first Williams fatality. Lindsay had graduated last year, a charming and kind young woman, a leader of the tennis team. I knew her quite well. The shock of the news—she had been a familiar

figure on campus—changed the tone of the debate, making it rather difficult to speak in abstractions. Resentment over the first evening's panel discussion now boiled over. On her own initiative, an enterprising sophomore spontaneously invited the entire student body to join her in pledging allegiance to the flag.

This gesture would likely have been lost in the rising tide of candlelight vigils and rallies were it not for the fact that Morton O. Schapiro, the college president, who was stranded in Seattle, read the invitation via e-mail and cited it in a mass mailing to the campus, inviting all to attend. For those like me who had sought some formal acknowledgement that the student body consisted of American citizens, and not merely therapy subjects, here was a welcome signal.

The simple ceremony took place the following Sunday afternoon in front of Chapin Auditorium, the formal center of the campus, where the college's American flag stood at half-mast as it had every day since Tuesday. About 200 students converged, decidedly subdued or somber. Many of the cafeteria staff quietly left their posts to join them. I saw our college president, just returned from Lindsay's funeral and clearly distressed. As a student pinned to his jacket a red, white, and blue flag (just purchased at Wal-Mart), Schapiro told me about the memorial service for Lindsay, who it turns out had been speaking to her father by phone when the plane struck, very close to her office on the 89th floor of the south tower. Apart from the janitors and cafeteria workers, he and I were the only college employees present.

The flagpole, it now became clear, had an unintended backdrop. Directly behind it stood a flimsy plywood shell, a roofless box the size of a small room. This, we learned, had been assembled by a lumber supplier as a demonstration shed for Habitat for Humanity. Even as our group was gathering,

a smaller group of students came to sit around the base of the shell. One of our party called out, inviting them to stand with us. Hand waves, shrugs, non-committal sounds. And so we pledged to the flag while our lounging watchers made something of the opposite gesture. It struck me later that during the whole aftermath of September 11, with its mixture of improvised ritual and rambling confessionals, this was the one ceremony where everyone knew exactly what to say.

Within a day or two, the Habitat shell would acquire an inscription in black paint, labeling it a MONUMENT and dedicating it in opposition to "senseless killing." I appreciated the coy wording.

LATER, AS our group broke up, an undergraduate asked us where we had gotten our flag ribbons. It seems that the students organizing the campus vigils also needed a supply to designate their volunteers. "We're not sure yet what color we want," he confessed—the problem, presumably, being the need to avoid confusion with the red insignia of the AIDS epidemic. When one of us suggested that they use our red, white, and blue ribbons, he responded, "Well, no; we've decided that would be too nationalistic. We don't want to alienate anyone." Too late.

By late September, the therapeutic phase had passed and the campus moved into the analytical phase, a region where a well-stocked college

can operate indefinitely on cruise control. I attended another panel discussion, this one devoted to American policy. Here, I thought, I would finally hear what I was yearning to hear from one of my colleagues ever since the morning of September 11—a clear, unambiguous, manly expression of fury at those who had wrought this destruction on our country. I sat waiting for the invective, only to be let down by talk of "alleged perpetrators" and the "possible involvement of bin Laden." As I walked out into the cool Berkshire fall, it occurred to me that in the course of the entire evening I had heard precisely one full-throated word of contempt: *slime*. The reference was to Jerry Falwell.

Prime-Time Patriotism

Terry Teachout

HOW DID artists and entertainers respond to the destruction of the World Trade Center?

One early response came from the German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, a founding figure of the postwar musical avant-garde, who blithely informed horrified reporters at a press conference in Hamburg that the September 11 attack was "the greatest work of art imaginable for the whole cosmos." As Stockhausen went on to explain:

Minds achieving something in an

TERRY TEACHOUT, COMMENTARY's music critic and the film critic of *Crisis* magazine, recently completed H.L. Mencken: A Life.

act that we couldn't even dream of in music, people rehearsing like mad for ten years, preparing fanatically for a concert, and then dying. . . . You have people who are that focused on a performance and then 5,000 people are dispatched to the afterlife, in a single moment. I couldn't do that.*

In a somewhat less exotic example of the moral idiocy that afflicts so many contemporary artists, the hard-Left Italian playwright and Nobel laureate Dario Fo dismissed the mass murders in New York and at the Pentagon in Washington as a mere bagatelle:

Big speculators joyfully splash

about in an economy that lets millions of people die every year in misery. What are 20,000 dead in New York by comparison? . . . Regardless of who carried out the massacre, this violence is the legitimate daughter of the culture of violence, hunger, and inhumane exploitation.

But perhaps one has no right to expect better of the now-decadent high culture of Western Europe,

* This statement, as well as much of the other material included in this article, was gleaned from "Of Terrorism and Art," a special web page created by www.artsjournal.com. This is an invaluable web site containing links, updated daily, to English-language newspaper and magazine articles on the arts.

where reflexive anti-Americanism long ago replaced reasoned discourse. It would be surprising, for instance, had the English playwright Harold Pinter, an America-hater of long standing, done anything other than scramble to affix his name to a round-robin letter urging world leaders not to take part in military strikes against countries that support terrorism. ("Human rights and civil liberties are being trampled on around the world as politicians call for tolerance while fanning the flames of intolerance with their preparations for war. . . . We must make war, but on poverty.")

What may be more noteworthy is the fact that few such statements were heard on this side of the Atlantic. To be sure, there was no shortage of homegrown America-bashing, but it came almost entirely from intellectuals and political activists rather than artists (unless one counts Susan Sontag, whose anti-American effusion appeared in the *New Yorker*, as a novelist *manqué* rather than as an intellectual). My own search of the web in the two weeks following September 11 turned up only a pair of statements by arts-related individuals criticizing the U.S. or speaking out in opposition to a military reprisal. Both were published in a *Boston Globe* symposium. Said Robert Brustein, artistic director of Harvard's American Repertory Theatre: "This is a time when art is most important because it complicates our thinking and prevents us from falling into melodramatic actions such as those we're about to take." Similarly the popular singer-songwriter James Taylor: "They did it. We have been changed. The idea was to infect us with the same rage and sense of impotence that drives them. . . . We should resist, resist becoming like those who did this."

Instead, there was an outpouring of support for the families of the 6,000-odd victims of the attacks, including the 300-plus New York policemen and firemen who died try-

ing to save them. Nor was this support merely nominal. Actors and musicians across the country donated their services to benefit performances, among them a gala by the Metropolitan Opera at which \$2.5 million was raised in a single evening. The night before that, more than 30 TV networks simultaneously aired *America: A Tribute to Heroes*, an all-star fund-raising telethon featuring such celebrities as Mariah Carey, Tom Cruise, Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts, Paul Simon, and Bruce Springsteen, some of whom made six- and seven-figure cash contributions to the World Trade Center relief efforts in addition to donating their services.

WHAT MADE all this striking was that it was unaccompanied by any public criticism of President Bush, a figure passionately opposed if not openly derided by virtually the whole of the American arts community prior to September 11. For it is no secret that contemporary American artists and entertainers are as much a part of the adversary culture as are their counterparts on university campuses and in the intellectual journals—convinced beyond question of the moral rectitude of liberalism, utterly ignorant of foreign affairs, and inclined to question automatically any use of force to defend American national interests. Few would vote for a Republican under any circumstances whatsoever; hardly any would ever have a good word for the police or other figures of authority.

Yet, in a development few could have predicted, here they were, praising the heroism of cops and—in at least one startling case—the leadership of George W. Bush. Said the filmmaker Woody Allen, an icon of Left-liberal culture: "It does seem that the President, whom I was certainly very critical of before he was elected . . . has got a good grasp on the problem."

This is not to say, however, that such words, and the "battlefield

conversions" they presumably reflect, should necessarily be taken at face value. For all its surface patriotism, a closer look at the actual content of *America: A Tribute to Heroes*, as well as at other artifacts from those first days after September 11, suggests a continuing and deep-seated ambivalence.

Thus, while many of the film and TV stars who appeared on the show somehow brought themselves to utter words of praise for the New York Police Department, not until twenty minutes before the end of the two-hour-long broadcast did one of them, the actress Julia Roberts, mention that the Pentagon had also been attacked. (She was 35th on the bill.) Far more on-screen time was devoted to warning Americans not to engage in racial profiling of Muslims than in praising the courage of those who died in Arlington, Virginia. A critic for the *Washington Post* called this near-omission "odd," which one may take as a euphemism; it was, in fact, predictable.

No less predictable was the unwillingness of the stars of *America: A Tribute to Heroes* to speak or sing in support of American retaliation against the terrorists.* Only two actors, Clint Eastwood and Kelsey Grammer, made even the vaguest allusion to the likelihood of military action. (Eastwood is known as a conservative, and Grammer is the star of the TV series *Frasier*, one of whose co-creators was on board the first hijacked plane to crash into the World Trade Center.) Only one musician, Tom Petty, sang a song ("I Won't Back Down") suggestive of the need for such action: "You can stand me up at the gates of hell/But I won't back down." Amazingly, the 70's rock star Neil Young chose in-

* The *New York Times* later reported that rock stars, although willing to raise funds for the families of the victims, refused to commit themselves to making USO tours for American troops: "Most rock musicians said that since they did not know how current events were going to play out, it was hard for them to tell whether they would be supporting their country's actions or criticizing them."

stead to perform John Lennon's "Imagine," whose simple-minded lyrics state that the world would be better off with "no religion" and "no countries."

This reluctance to acknowledge the hard realities of the current crisis was more than a matter of politics. It was also deeply redolent of the narcissistic emotivism of the baby boomers who made up the majority of the cast. For all their vaunted "engagement" in public causes, the members of this generation of performers have always been far more interested in themselves than in politics, which they tend to treat as a form of auto-therapy. (Small wonder that Bill Clinton, that unrivaled master of emotive politics, so quickly became their favorite President.) Confronted with the naked face of terrorism, they talked endlessly of art as a source of "healing" and performed songs whose lyrics cheerily assert that love can solve all the world's woes. Just whose wounds they thought needed healing was glaringly apparent.

Aesthetically, too, the show was mostly a bust. Except for "My City of Ruins," the spare, dignified lament by Bruce Springsteen with which it opened, virtually none of the songs heard on *America: A Tribute to Heroes* rose to the emotional heights of the occasion. Exceptions might be made for Paul Simon's touchingly frail performance of "Bridge Over Troubled Water" and Billy Joel's strikingly apposite "New York State of Mind," both written more than a quarter-century ago—and, of course, Irving Berlin's "God Bless America." Not even a glutinous performance by the Canadian pop balladeer Celine Dion could erase the sweep and balance of Berlin's great melody, which served as a reminder of what American popular culture lost with the coming of rock-and-roll.

Before leaving the realm of pop culture, I should say a word about another, younger generation of ac-

tors, musicians, and writers, those between the ages of twenty-five and forty—that is, just below the generation so heavily represented on *America: A Tribute to Heroes*. This demographic cohort, known as Generation X, is famously characterized above all by its cynical, detached view of the world, a view developed in large part as a reaction to the gooey self-absorption of the baby boomers. The response of these people to the crisis was, accordingly, rather different.

"Everyone I talk to just feels like, 'God, my whole life is obsolete now,'" said Todd Hanson, the thirty-two-year-old head writer of the *Onion*, an influential satirical weekly. "The whole smug, Gen-X irony, it just feels like it's permanently obsolete." Echoed the Gen-X comedian and actress Janeane Garofalo, "Who would have thought that I'd be angry on behalf of my country? I'm used to being angry *at* my country."

The same sense of disorientation was reflected in the first post-crisis issue of the acutely trend-conscious *Entertainment Weekly*, the cover of which featured a photo of an American flag and the headline "What Lies Ahead: The Challenge to Our Culture." In the accompanying story, Jeff Gordiner argued that far-reaching shifts were in the offing:

If America is a nation held spell-bound by fantasy, if we've spent a lot of the past 25 years getting our kicks from catty irony and glib sadism and empty fizz, it took only an instant of excruciating reality to render our old appetites moot, piddling, even nauseating.

Still, as with the baby boomers, there is little reason to believe that the Irony Lite of Generation X will prove equal to the overwhelming emotions of a nation at war. Least of all can one expect the American film industry, whose product is marketed almost exclusively to Gen-Xers, to reflect the changed cultural landscape in more than a trivial way. Re-

vealingly, Gordiner's story was followed by a report in the same issue of *Entertainment Weekly* that Hollywood producers were scuttling excessively violent film projects and replacing them with "old-fashioned patriotism" and "lighter, frothier fare." Not only is it hard to see how American movies could become any frothier than they already are, but contemporary Hollywood's idea of "old-fashioned patriotism" was all too plainly on exhibit this past summer in the form of *Pearl Harbor*, a movie of the utmost banality and historical ignorance—and one that did poorly at the box office, to boot.

ON THE high-culture front, at any rate, things were rather better—at least in the world of music, and at least as long as the musicians were actually playing and not speaking. New Yorkers were especially fortunate in that two of their leading musical ensembles responded so quickly to the events of September 11. Scrapping their opening-night program, Kurt Masur and the New York Philharmonic replaced it with a benefit performance of Brahms's *A German Requiem*, telecast nationwide by PBS, whose urgent eloquence will never be forgotten by those who heard it. The Metropolitan Opera's all-Verdi benefit gala, held two nights later, was if possible even more compelling, not least because of Verdi's galvanizing forcefulness and utter lack of self-pity. Plácido Domingo, the outstanding Otello of his generation, appeared in the third act of this greatest of all Shakespearean operas, and the audience was clearly stunned by the huge scale of the passions generated by his conflict with Iago.

Only in such supreme masterpieces of Western art, one was reminded at these performances, is it possible for the beleaguered soul of man to find true catharsis. And one was also reminded of the fact—and of the significance of the fact—that the Taliban government has banned music in Afghanistan, permitting

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP,
MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

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Gary Rosen, Managing Editor

only the singing of unaccompanied religious songs and Taliban chants. As John Bailey, a British musicologist, told the *Chicago Tribune*, "All musical instruments in the possession of Afghan performers have been confiscated and burned. Those caught in possession of musical instruments are imprisoned, fined, or even beaten, and their instruments are destroyed." Here indeed is a cautionary tale for American academics who decry the "cultural imperialism" of the West.

Alas, however, when they were not making music, American classical musicians were no less prone than their pop counterparts to exalt feeling over thinking, or to issue public statements suggesting something of the moral and intellectual confusion with which they are beset. A case in point was this widely distributed e-mail message sent by a firm of classical-music publicists based in Manhattan:

Most tragedies commence when the "unthinkable" takes place, and what happened in our country last week was not only unthinkable but also unfathomable. . . . As we all return to our daily endeavors, we would like to extend special good wishes to everyone during these times, when we will all be reflecting on how we might contribute to a more pacific and compassionate world.

The words, vacuous enough, covered a disabled and disabling mentality. Had New York experienced a "tragedy," and was it both "unthinkable" and "unfathomable"? In fact, what happened was a deliberate act of war, unthinkable and unfathomable only to those unprepared to acknowledge the existence of morally responsible agents who would knowingly choose evil over good. (The anonymous author of this message might have profited from attending a performance of *Otello*.) As for contributing "to a more pacific and compassionate world," the best such contribution,

moral and otherwise, would be a shooting war against the monsters who thus laughed at our pacifism and compassion.

Somehow, though, one doubts that many of our classical-music artists would consider this a valid "contribution." In introducing the New York Philharmonic's memorial performance of *A German Requiem*, Zarin Mehta, the orchestra's executive director, quoted words by the arch-liberal Leonard Bernstein: "This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before." At the end of the PBS telecast of the concert, the following sentence was flashed on the screen: "This program is dedicated to the lives lost . . . and to the indomitable spirit of all who survive, mourn, and rebuild." Not here and, so far as I know, not elsewhere was any public statement made by *any* classical musician in America in support of the men and women who would soon be called upon to go into harm's way, some of them undoubtedly to die. What—if anything—the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera will do to honor them, let alone to speak out in defense of the culture of which these institutions are themselves an integral part, is an open question.

It is admirable that so many should have contributed so much of their time and money to the noble cause of relieving the material wants of the families of those who died in the collapse of the World Trade Center. But that was a safe call, especially in the case of pop-culture celebrities whose popularity varies directly with the good will of the general public. A much tougher challenge to this community lies just ahead, one that should by all rights force a deep reconsideration of some of the fundamental tenets of the adversary culture from which so many American artists have sprung and by which they take their bearings. It should; but whether it will—that, too, remains to be seen.

The Unrelenting and Virulent Hatred of the Arabs

Will peace be possible under those conditions?

After over fifty years of statehood, Israel is a lone outpost of Western civilization and its values. The Arab nations surrounding it are a swamp of terrorism, corruption, dictatorship, and human enslavement. But the hatred of the Arabs against Israel and against all Jews is so abiding and so virulent that peace, at least for the foreseeable future, seems to be most unlikely.

What are the facts?

No "Sacrifice" Will Overcome the Hatred: Many still believe that the conflict between the Arabs and the Jews could be settled if the Israelis were willing to bring greater "sacrifices for peace". Such "sacrifices" would include relinquishing ever-larger portions of their tiny country (less than half the size of San Bernardino County in California) to the Palestinians, dismantling the "settlements" in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), handing the Golan Heights to Syria, and allowing the "return of the refugees" a group that has grown miraculously from about 500,000 to

somewhere around 5 million, and the absorption of even a substantial fraction of which would signify the demographic end of the Jewish state. But by now, after over one year of the bloody war against Israel in the Al Aksa Intifada, it is clear to even the most confirmed "doves", to even the most ardent supporters of the "Oslo Peace Process," that absolutely nothing that Israel could do, any further "sacrifice" that Israel were prepared to bring would satisfy the Arabs and would promote peace. The sad but irrefutable conclusion is that only the complete disappearance of Israel, its annihilation, its being wiped off the map could satisfy the Arabs and most of the Moslem world.

During his recent visit to Syria, the Pope listened to Bashar-al-Asad, the President of Syria, declare that "...the Jews have betrayed Jesus Christ, with the same mentality with which they tried to betray and kill the prophet Mohammed." (Disappointingly, the Pope did not protest this canard, either right then or at a later date.) Saddam Hussein, the tyrant of Iraq, expressed the wishes of his country and of the Arab world with the succinct entreaty "God damn the Jews."

"Israel's only course...is to assume its previous stance of unflinching deterrence...and not to be inhibited...to preempt resolutely if it appears necessary to assure survival of the country."

Mortal Hatred and the "Big Lie": The "big lie," invented by the notorious Joseph Goebbels of Nazi infamy, is a mainstay of Arab hatred and propaganda. In Egypt and Jordan (the two Arab countries technically at peace with Israel), government-controlled news sources published that Israel had distributed drug-laced chewing gum and candy to kill children and to make women sexually corrupt. The Jews (Israelis) are being accused of having introduced foot-and-mouth disease in the Middle East. The age-old calumny of Jews using the blood of Christian children in order to bake their Passover matzos is alive and well in Arab publications. The Protocols of the Elders of

Zion, an egregious falsification originating in Czarist Russia, is a steady best-seller in all Arab countries. Among other malevolent fabrications, it accuses "international Jewry" of "limitless

ambition, inexhaustible greed, and hatred beyond imagination."

In the controlled Arab press, Holocaust denial and accusation of the Zionists having been in cahoots with the German Nazis are regular features. Egypt's government-sponsored *Al Akhbar* newspaper has expressed fervent thanks to Adolf Hitler for having taken advance revenge on the "vilest criminals on the face of the earth." Still, it berates him for not having been thorough enough in his task of extermination. The Arabs do not consider Israel a normal country, but a creation of the devil, an excrescence, a malignant force of aggressors, murderers, infidels and barbarians. It should be destroyed, for the glory of God, no matter what sacrifices that might entail.

Mortal hatred against Israel and against the Jews is taught to Arab children from the very first grade. Children are encouraged to sacrifice themselves as martyrs and suicide missiles, with promises that Paradise with unimaginable pleasures awaits those who sacrifice themselves in the holy cause of killing Jews.

This bottomless hatred, a hatred that pervades the Arab world in all strata of society and is incessantly fomented by Arab governments, including those supposed to be "at peace" with Israel, cannot be assuaged by negotiation or by making any further "sacrifices for peace". Nothing will suffice, except the destruction, the complete disappearance of Israel. The Arab states, having been unable in over fifty years and in many wars to defeat and exterminate the hated Jews, are now feverishly arming themselves with "conventional weapons" (easily purchased from the West, including, sad to say, from the United States), and are ardently pursuing the development of weapons of mass annihilation. Just as the suicide bombers do not vacillate to sacrifice themselves, one can safely expect that, once in possession of such weapons, the Arabs will not hesitate to sacrifice millions of their own people in order to destroy Israel. Israel's only course in the face of this almost certain prospect is to assume its previous stance of unflinching deterrence and, as it once did in the destruction of the Iraqi atomic reactor at Osirak in 1981, not to be inhibited by "international opinion" to preempt resolutely if it appears necessary to assure survival of the country.

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Books in Review

Brotherhood

At the Entrance
to the Garden of Eden:
A Jew's Search for God with
Christians and Muslims
in the Holy Land
by Yossi Klein Halevi

William Morrow. 315 pp. \$25.00

Reviewed by
Hillel Halkin

YOSSI KLEIN Halevi, for many years a senior correspondent for the *Jerusalem Report* and now also a regular contributor from Israel to the *New Republic*, is one of the Jewish world's finest journalists. An American-born Israeli whose first book, *Memoirs of a Jewish Extremist*, told of growing up in a Brooklyn family of religiously Orthodox Holocaust survivors, he displays in his writing both a great capacity for empathy and a strong sense of where—as a committed Zionist, a politically centrist Israeli, and an observant Jew—he himself stands.

HILLEL HALKIN, a regular contributor, is an Israeli essayist and translator.

Much of the strength of his reporting on politics and culture derives from this ability to slip inside the skin of those he disagrees with while not compromising his own beliefs.

Klein Halevi's new book is about religion rather than politics or culture—to the extent that in the Middle East these things are ever separable. Indeed, it is his wish that they *be* separable, coupled with the realization that they almost never are, that impels this account of his quest for a religious common denominator among Jews, Muslims, and Christians living at the heart of the Israeli-Arab conflict. Not a lowest common denominator—Klein Halevi is not interested in the usual ecumenical clichés about our Judeo-Christian-Islamic heritage. What concerns him is not religious narrative or theology but religious experience—and specifically mystical experience, that direct perception of the divine nature of things that, going beyond the forms of conventional religion to the Ultimately Formless, has been described with remarkable similarity by the most varied traditions. Not only in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam but

also in Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and other belief systems, mystics tend to talk the same way because, to judge by the writings they have left us, they feel and think many of the same things. Even if their terminology differs, they might be compared to a brotherhood of pilgrims traveling a single road.

Can such a brotherhood be found in the Middle East? Can it survive the region's violence and hatred? These are the questions posed by Klein Halevi's new book. His answer is a qualified "yes." Yet one need not be unappreciative of his thoughtfulness, his gift for portraiture, or the lures of the mystic way itself to realize how thin a "yes" it is.

THE BOOK is divided into three parts: an opening one dealing with Islam, a middle one turning to Christianity, and a closing one returning to Islam. The Islamic sections are centered around three Sufi sheikhs whom Klein Halevi seeks out and comes to know. (Sufism has been, since its inception two centuries after Muhammad, the main mystical current in Islam.)

The first of these, Sheikh Ishak Idriss Sakouta, is a half-Saudi, half-Egyptian "religious counselor" first encountered on a visit to Jerusalem. The second, Sheikh Ibrahim, lives in a West Bank village near Nablus. The third, Sheikh Ibrahim's teacher Sheikh Abdul-Rahim, resides in a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. All three men are willing to meet with Klein Halevi and allow him to participate in Sufi rituals even though they know he is a religious Jew, and he is grateful to them for this. (He is also careful to note that this willingness was manifested before last year's breakdown of the Oslo process, since which time he has not been in touch with any of them.) Their attitude toward him ranges from the enthusiasm of Sheikh Ibrahim, who claims to "love Jews" and is flattered by Klein Halevi's attentions, to the ulteriority of Sheikh Abdul-Rahim, who would like to convert his Jewish interlocutor to Islam. Yet while all three men are reasonably friendly, none evinces the least interest in the author's Jewishness, let alone in a religious dialogue with him.

Nor, when talking about religion, do their remarks ever rise above the commonplace. "It is God who decides who has inner peace," says Sheikh Ishak. "God doesn't dance. He is the dance," says Sheikh Ibrahim. "If a person loves people, prays, and tries to get close to God, his grave is like paradise. If he does the opposite, his grave is like fire," says Sheikh Abdul-Rahim. Only once is Klein Halevi jarred by any of them into a higher awareness.

This occurs when he joins a Sufi *zikr* or trance dance at Sheikh Abdul-Rahim's. "Beyond ecstasy," he writes, "the *zikr* had imparted the feeling that I'd found my natural rhythm and could keep spinning inexhaustibly. . . . I [was] no longer an Israeli with a *kipah* in a Gaza mosque but part of the great human wave of surrender." At a climactic moment, his fears of being in the mosque allayed by the atmosphere

of religious devotion, he even confesses to having been a soldier of occupation in his hosts' refugee camp. To his relief, they do not appear to hold it against him.

Klein Halevi's encounters with mystical Christians are on a higher level. In part that is because these meetings are unencumbered by contemporary passions or politics, in part because the Christians involved are more open and intellectually sophisticated. At one point, for instance, the author is told by Sister Johanna, a Catholic nun in Jerusalem, that her "hardest spiritual struggle" has been "overcoming sentimental love," because "the difficulty is to love truly, without discrimination. . . . If you close your heart to even one person, it's not yet divine love." In these words we are hearing something that, while hardly original, needs to be thought about. (That Klein Halevi chooses, uncharacteristically, not to think about it is a point I will come back to.)

Moreover, many of the author's Christian contacts are genuinely interested in Judaism—some out of a sense of guilt toward Jews akin to what he himself feels toward Palestinians—and are looking for a relationship with it. Even if they occasionally step on Jewish toes, they are quick to apologize. When Sister Johanna tells Klein Halevi that the Jews' refusal to believe in Jesus means "that the people of Israel isn't accepting what God wants to give it," she makes amends at once by "moving her fingers to simulate talking lips, as if [she realized that] her mouth was out of control."

SUMMING UP his quest, Klein Halevi writes in a post-*intifada* epilogue:

At difficult moments—when I am overwhelmed with fear for my children's safety and rage at the Palestinian leadership for rejecting compromise and despair at the Middle East for turning the Jewish homecoming into another form of exile—I try to re-

call what I leaned from my teachers, the monastics and sheikhs of the Holy Land. I remind myself of Sister Johanna's warning against building barriers in the heart and excluding even one person from our love. . . . And Sheikh Abdul-Rahim's contempt for death. . . . The cross and minaret have become for me cherished symbols of God's Presence, reminders that He speaks to us in multiple languages—that He speaks to us at all. Even if much of Arab Islam has descended into the kind of Jew-hatred for which Christianity is now trying to atone, I insist on revering Islam and its fearless heart. The fanatics will not deprive me of that victory.

But this is too pat. It is too pat not only because, as Klein Halevi acknowledges, Sufis and mystical nuns are a tiny and uninfluential minority of their Middle-Eastern coreligionists, but also because it does not grapple with the hard questions implicit in its own formulations. Might it not be possible, for example, that the Islamic "contempt for death" is somehow related to Muslim terrorists who—contemptuous also of life, their own and others'—have struck repeatedly at Israel and now at America? If it is no accident that the overwhelming bulk of terror in today's world is carried out by Muslims, then Klein Halevi owes his readers at least some explanation of why he thinks "the fearless heart" of Islam has nothing to do with this. What makes him so certain that, when the Jew from Jerusalem has left his mosque, Sheikh Abdul-Rahim does not, like many of his non-Sufi colleagues in Gaza, praise the fearlessness of the suicide bomber?

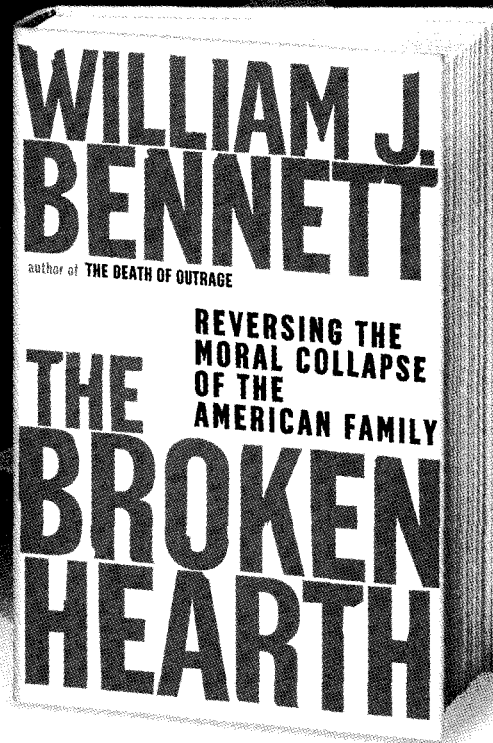
One's reservations about *At the Entrance to the Garden of Eden* go well beyond this, however. They go right to Sister Johanna's words, endorsed by Klein Halevi, that overcoming "sentimental love" means "to love truly, without discrimina-

tion." The truth, it seems to me, is exactly the opposite.

I can think of nothing more sentimental, and more divorced from the hard ground of human reality, than the idea of indiscriminating love, the notion that it is possible—indeed desirable—indeed imperative—to love the stranger in the street as one loves one's family and friends. To love everyone with part of one's heart is to love no one with all of one's heart, *not even* one's family and friends. This is a nunnish ideal of loving that only those, like Sister Johanna or Jesus, who have no husbands, wives, or children can believe in. It marks one of the great differences between Judaism, in which there is no monasticism or celibacy, and Christianity, which was built on these two things. To Christians like Sister Johanna, Judaism's insistence that true love is hierarchical and preferential—that one's own come first—is clannish and egotistical. To Jews like myself, Sister Johanna's determination to love everyone equally is emotional escapism.

The mystic way and its beliefs are alluring. There is something in all of us that yearns to be "part of the great human wave of surrender." There is something in us that is easily exasperated by the pettiness of human egos, interests, conflicts, and cruelty and that craves a selfless world of human brotherhood. But the self, while it can and must be disciplined, cannot be extinguished. Those who deny its claims in the name of divine love more often than not merely end up by tormenting it. And tormented selves will not bring brotherhood to the Middle East. Politics will not bring brotherhood, either, but it may one day satisfy enough selfish interests to give the region some peace.

**If we are to repair
the social fabric, the work
must begin at home.**



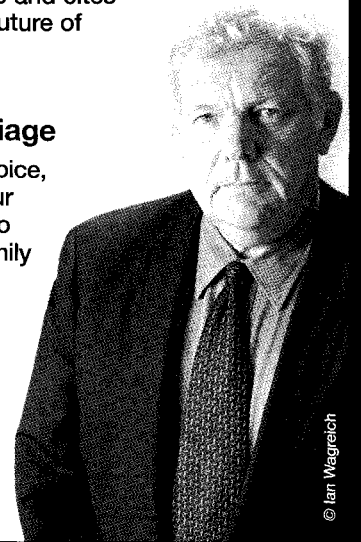
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Better and Better

The Skeptical
Environmentalist:
Measuring the Real
State of the World
by Bjørn Lomborg

Cambridge. 496 pp. \$27.95 (paper)

Reviewed by
Kevin A. Shapiro

ON CHURCH Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a large and colorful mural, sponsored by the Women's Community Cancer Project (WCCP), encourages environmental awareness and activism. The mural depicts several women gathered around a model of the earth, and is emblazoned with the motto: "Indication of harm, not proof of harm, is our call to action."

In other words, we should not wait for confirmation of our fears; if something seems horribly awry, it probably is, and will only get worse while we do nothing. This has been called the precautionary principle, and it is often invoked today in connection not only with chemical pollution, the elimination of which is the goal of the WCCP, but also with supposedly even greater threats like overpopulation and global warming.

The problem with the precautionary principle, however, is that it is wrong. One of the peculiarities of the human condition is that we are irrationally averse to risks, and tend to overestimate the probable negative consequences of actions and events. We are fascinated by bad news, and generally bored by good news; more often than not, we tend to perceive things as being worse than they actually are. Whatever the ultimate reasons for this predilection, it is hardly a sound basis for dealing with complex, long-term problems.

In the 1960's and 70's, a string of alarmist tracts—most notably Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962)

and Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968)—stoked fears in America and Europe of an imminent apocalypse that, needless to say, never came about. Strangely, however, we took no notice of the fact that the catastrophes we worried about had failed to occur. Even more strangely, the doomsayers never lost their credibility, instead merely postponing their deadlines to convenient future dates.

One person who pointed out the absurdity of all this was the late economist Julian Simon. It is true that Simon had a somewhat bellicose style, and a flair for provocative thought-experiments. (In his 1981 book, *The Ultimate Resource*, for example, he estimated that the entire population of the world could be supplied with food from an area equal to the combined land mass of Vermont and Massachusetts, or about one-thousandth of presently cultivated land.) Partly for this reason—but mostly because his arguments ran counter to what environmentalists *believed* to be true—Simon was dismissed as a right-wing crank. Meanwhile, the environmental movement continued to imagine new and even greater problems, all of them requiring immediate action.

BUT WAS Simon mistaken? In 1997, the Danish statistician Bjørn Lomborg, a self-described "old left-wing Greenpeace member," set out to disprove Simon's disproofs and confirm the claims of environmental alarmists. But he failed spectacularly—and, what is much more unusual, in *The Skeptical Environmentalist* he says so. In 25 chapters supplemented and supported by almost 3,000 footnotes, Lomborg takes a fresh look at the data, using the newest publicly available evidence to examine long-term trends in human welfare and the quality of the environment. What he shows is that not only are things not getting worse, they are getting better.

Lomborg's tone throughout is mild and modest, and his arguments

are exceedingly careful. His explanations are lucid, unbiased, and unadorned by rhetorical flourishes (which makes for a sometimes clunkily matter-of-fact style). At every possible turn he is willing to grant the benefit of the doubt to his adversaries. Nevertheless, his conclusions are nothing short of breathtaking.

Throughout the world, including the developing world, life expectancy is increasing. Food and energy are becoming both cheaper and more plentiful. Natural resources are available in greater abundance. Inequality in purchasing power is decreasing. The air and water in our cities are cleaner than has been the case in at least 500 years. These are facts, and there is no getting around them.

Environmental organizations, when faced with such data, argue that even if they are true, progress has come at too great a cost—namely, the irreversible disruption of nature—and is therefore immoral and unsustainable. Lomborg takes on and demolishes this assertion, demonstrating that most of the problems environmentalists predict for the future are unlikely to materialize.

Thus, at least one fear common in the 1980's—that acid rain would cause the death of forests—has already been conclusively dispelled (though we never heard about this from the media). As for the effects of so-called ecological catastrophes like oil spills, these have been surprisingly benign; in almost all cases, the affected ecosystems are well on their way to total recovery. Estimates of the proportion of species likely to become extinct as a result of human activity are also wildly exaggerated, often by a factor of more than 50. Global warming is demonstrably overestimated, and even if the estimates were correct, climate change would most probably not have anything like the calamitous effects that are usually foretold. Population growth, whose supposed perils constitute a major shibboleth of the environmental movement, is

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Emily C. Rose

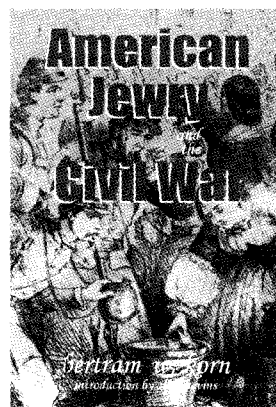
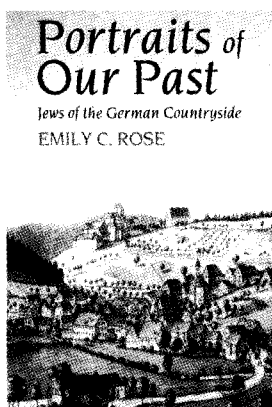
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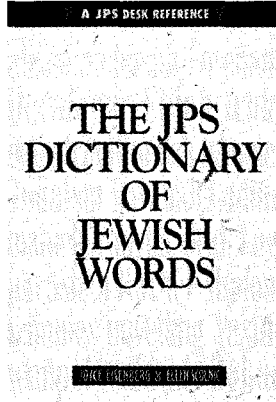
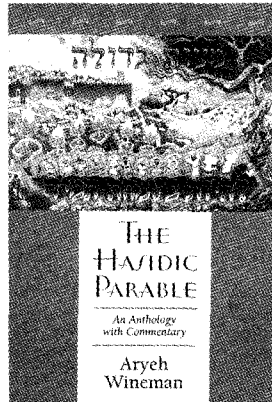
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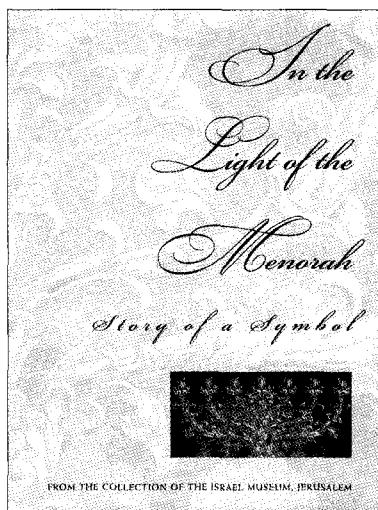
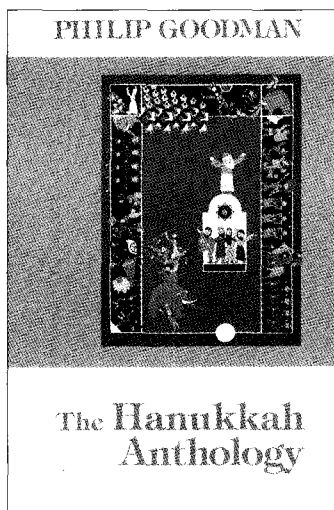
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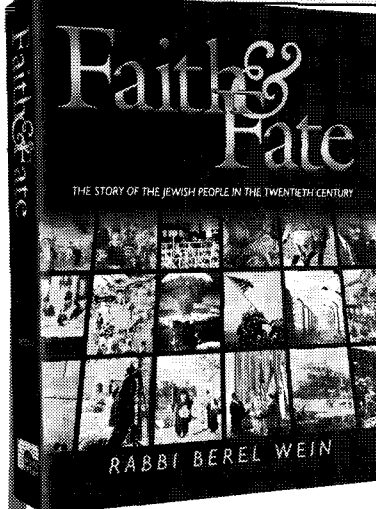
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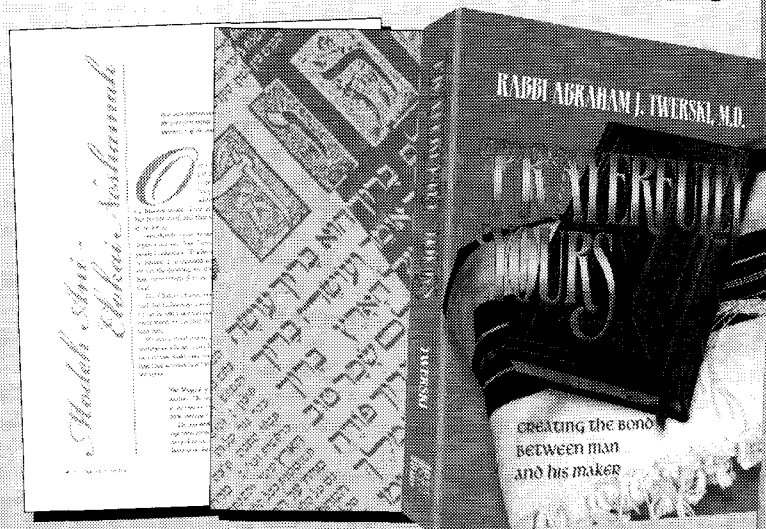
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likely to level off in the near future, and in any case there is more than enough food and space in the world to accommodate many more people.

IF THE predictions of environmental doomsayers are wrong, Lomborg also shows that the precautionary principle, if taken seriously, is downright dangerous. Take the simple example of pesticides, one of the great evils fought by the Women's Community Cancer Project. *At most*, the use of pesticides results in twenty extra deaths from cancer per year in the United States (out of a total of 200,000)—equivalent to about 1 percent of the deaths caused by the use of spices like mustard and cinnamon, and about one-hundredth of 1 percent of the deaths caused by natural properties of foods themselves.

Proponents of "organic" farming might counter that this is, all the same, unacceptable: though we cannot (or do not wish to) eliminate the risk of cancer from eating spices, we can (and ought to) eliminate the risk from chemical pesticides. But not only would this be a hugely expensive proposition, costing the economy at least \$1 billion per saved life, it would be counterproductive. If pesticides were phased out, fruit and vegetables would become more expensive, causing people to eat fewer of them in favor of fattier and starchier foods; this in turn would significantly increase the rate of death from cancer and heart disease.

A similarly stark example comes from a cost-benefit analysis of the precautionary principle as applied to climate change caused by carbon-dioxide emissions (CO₂). On the assumption that global warming will occur to about the degree most often predicted, and that we do nothing about it, its adverse effects are likely to cost the world economy about \$5 trillion in total—not a trivial sum. If, however, we attempt to stabilize global CO₂ emissions, we will be faced with a cost of about

\$8.5 trillion, while actual cutbacks in CO₂ emissions could cost an astronomical \$38 trillion. Surely, suggests Lomborg, there are better ways to spend \$33 trillion than in combating what is almost certain to be an insignificant environmental problem.

THIS, INDEED, is the central message of Lomborg's book: given the range of large and small problems that we face as a civilization, we should use our resources wisely, in ways that are likely to pay off in the long term. Although there is less starvation than there has been in the past, undoubtedly it is a moral imperative to reduce it even further. And the methods for doing so are not mysterious. In order to increase agricultural production in the developing world, we need to improve farming methods, both through bet-

ter technology (genetically modified foods) and by increasing the use of existing aids to agriculture (fertilizer). These methods will not be available to third-world farmers if they remain impoverished. In like manner, poverty is the main stumbling block to improvements in the environment and human health.

The point here is stunningly simple. The real way to improve the environment is to reduce poverty in the world; the real way to reduce poverty is to encourage the global development of free and efficient markets. This requires a substantial initial investment in public health (sanitation and access to clean water) and education. Beyond that, however, the requirements are virtually cost-free—consisting, in the main, of democratic governance and adherence to the rule of law. (One of the conspicuous subtexts of *The*

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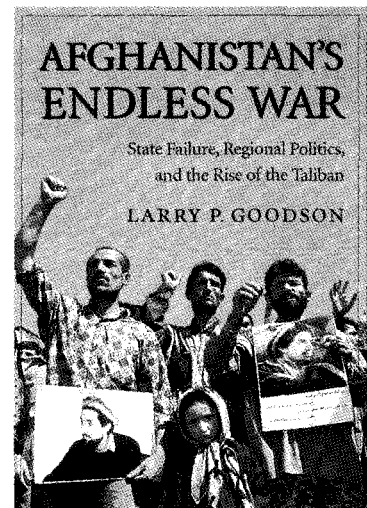
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Skeptical Environmentalist is that exceptions to the general trend of global improvement have occurred in totalitarian systems; thus, caloric consumption, while rising in most of the developing world, has fallen in Cuba and Iraq.)

But the link between free-market economies and human progress is, perhaps more than anything else, exactly what the environmental movement is most perturbed by. Lomborg puts his finger squarely on this issue—the extent, that is, to which environmentalism has become a proxy for anti-capitalism. It is, he says, the “environmental trump card,” and it goes like this: even if we are doing better and better on almost every objective environmental indicator, we *still* need to change our way of life by decreasing consumption, limiting industrial activity, and sharing resources.

As Lomborg goes on to point out, this argument, untethered from either an objective evaluation of risks or any consideration of what will actually leave us better off, is wholly ideological. Indeed, if we followed the course of action loudly advocated by the largest environmental organizations, we would almost certainly end up, as P.J. O'Rourke put it in his 1994 book, *All the Trouble in the World*, in “a just and peaceful world full of powerless nobodies who are broke and have empty shopping malls.”

And herein lies the great value of *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, even apart from the clarity with which it shows that the state of the world is improving. A reader of this book cannot fail to be made acutely aware of the relationship between environmental decisions and human welfare. That relationship is precisely what goes suppressed or unrecognized when environmental issues are discussed by most policy-makers and in the media, and it is certainly never invoked when the precautionary principle is under discussion. Bjørn Lomborg is correct to say that, in deciding how to ap-

ply our resources in order to better the state of humanity, we must be guided by evidence and not by intuition. He is also correct to point out, as was Julian Simon before him, that our record in this regard has been astonishingly good.

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Reviewed by
Noemie Emery

ONCE, in the earlier part of the 20th century, there were writers who were literate but reached a large popular audience and who were adored both for their work and for their personae, which, combined, appeared larger than life. Living like rock stars, they tended to die in much the same manner: of liquor or drugs, burned out or suicides. Nancy Milford has written about two of them—F. Scott Fitzgerald (and his wife Zelda) and now, 30 years later, Edna St. Vincent Millay.

Millay and Fitzgerald had too much in common: rocket-like ascents based on one book or one poem; dazzling reigns in their mid- and late twenties; descents after that into valleys of ashes; early deaths at downward arcs in their careers. But while the causative factor in Fitzgerald's collapse—his wife's insanity—is painfully evident, the reasons for

Millay's remain more mysterious. They concern things that Milford and Daniel Mark Epstein, Millay's second recent biographer, allude to and hint at, but never explain.

MILLAY was born in 1892 into a star-struck Maine family, dirt poor but bent on accomplishment. In 1912, one poem, “Renascence,” changed her life forever. Rightly described by Epstein as a “public sensation,” it brought her fame, sponsors, and a scholarship to Vassar, which was her springboard into Greenwich Village, where she arrived in 1917. The six years that followed were simply astonishing.

In 1919, her verse play, *Aria da Capo*, opened, a nationwide and international sensation. A collection, *A Few Figs from Thistles*, was published in 1920, *Second April* the year after, and *The Harp Weaver* in 1923, the year in which she became the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize. In 1927 she wrote the libretto for an opera by Deems Taylor, *The King's Henchman*; the book version ran through eighteen printings. *The Buck in the Snow* sold an amazing 40,000 copies in 1928. At the same time, her theatrical gifts—she had trained as an actress—made her a glittering presence whose readings were sold out all over the country. For almost two decades, she would be one of the most famous women in American life.

All this took place against, and was fueled by, a private life of mythic proportions. Whatever Millay had does not come through in pictures, but it was clearly of movie-star dimensions, and it led to sequential and concurrent affairs with some women and dozens, possibly hundreds, of men. In 1923, at thirty-one, she married Eugen Jan Boissevain, a Dutch importer rich, handsome, and confident enough to take the back seat to a succession of flamboyant, self-dramatizing, and much more public wives (the first of whom had been the suffragette Inez Milholland). He bought Millay a town-

NOEMIE EMERY reviewed Naomi Wolf's *Misconceptions* in our October issue.

house, an island, and an emerald ring worth \$42,000 in 1920's money, and together they acquired a farm, Steepletop, in upstate New York.

In 1928, on a reading tour, she fell hard for George Dillon, a twenty-one-year-old boytoy who seemed hardly to merit the emotion she lavished on him, or the grand romantic drama of her verse. Boissevain "understood," tried to welcome him into the family, and, when Millay followed Dillon to Europe, kept the home fires burning while showering her with letters pledging support and devotion. *Fatal Interview*, the sonnet sequence she wrote about this affair, sold 50,000 copies at the depth of the Depression. Millay herself seemed to be at the peak of her powers. In fact, her decline had begun.

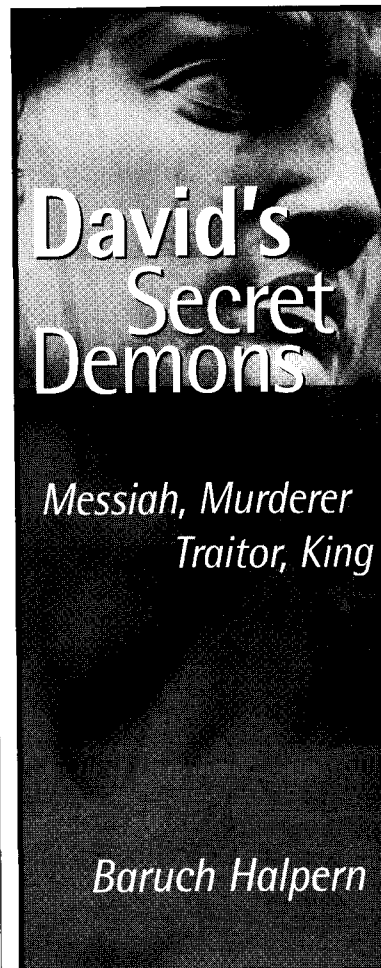
As early as 1922, Millay's health had become tricky, and in July 1923, directly after her wedding, she underwent complicated abdominal surgery. In 1931, the death of her mother sent her into a long drinking binge. Shortly afterward, her affair with Dillon began to wind down, and so did her standing with the critics, though not yet the public. "Her reviews," Milford tells us, "were becoming more and more mixed. Some were downright dismissive, beginning to suggest that her celebrity had outstripped her poetry, and that the younger generation was moving on."

Depressed, she started to distance herself. "Her drinking in 1933 and 1934 was constant, gargantuan," writes Epstein. Then, in 1936, she had a car accident that damaged some nerves in her back and her shoulder, and she began a devastating addiction to morphine. By 1938, Milford tells us, her husband was confiding to friends that she was constantly bedridden. By 1940, she was in seclusion at Steepletop behind a buffer of drugs and liquor, and three years later she was taking an average of three grains of morphine (200 times the prescribed dose for an advanced cancer patient)

in about twenty doses a day. She would stay at Steepletop for the rest of her life. In 1949, the critic Edmund Wilson, an old friend, saw her there for the first time in nineteen years. "She had become somewhat heavy and dumpy," he wrote later. "She was terribly nervous, her hands shook, there was a look of fright in her bright green eyes."

Boissevain died following surgery for lung cancer in the summer of

that year. Two weeks later, Millay was hospitalized for "neurasthenia," complicated by cirrhosis and nutritional deficiencies. When she got out, she insisted on returning to Steepletop, where she made a stab at getting her life back in order, taking up some household duties and starting once more to write. On the night of October 18, 1950, she stayed up late, writing and drinking. She was found dead the next morn-



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ing, her neck broken, lying at the bottom of the stairs.

WHAT SEEMS clear is that Millay began to take drugs for physical ailments and continued for other, less tangible woes. To some extent, then, her decline tracks the decline of Fitzgerald. But just as she lacks his stature as a major artist, her life lacks the tragic contours of his. Fitzgerald crashed, and then grew and changed mightily, taking responsibility for his wife and his daughter, infusing his work with the pain of experience. *This Side of Paradise* (1920) and *Tender Is the Night* (1934) seem to be written by two different people, so vast is the emotional chasm between them. Millay never changed, she only grew smaller, and there seems little difference between her earlier and later work.

This was the problem: she never grew up. She never found a role to

play beyond her star turn as Girl Poet, or a subject beyond that of romantic attraction. When Millay was near forty, a newspaper described her as an "elf." Her husband called her his "child" all her life. "Doubtless she would rather die than make this admission that she is growing older," said Arthur Davison Ficke, a long-time friend and ex-lover, when Millay was in her late forties. "She has built up so enormous an image of herself as the Enchanted Little Faery Princess that she must defend it with her life." But there is small call for sprites past a certain age, and only drink and drugs seem to have dulled the pain of her inability to find another way to live.

In any discussion of Millay's self-destruction, her loving husband has to play a central part. He started as her protector and became her enabler, shielding her from responsibility, and then from all consequences, save for the worst one of having never faced consequences. When she began to want drugs, he procured them for her, injected her, and then started shooting up himself to keep her company. Again the contrasting example of Fitzgerald is instructive: beginning like Millay as a "romantic egotist," he was shocked out of his self-absorption by utter disaster, finding his own soul as a consequence. Millay's husband sank into her self-absorption alongside her, and helped murder them both.

Nancy Milford makes no claims for Millay's poetry, but simply presents it as she goes along. Daniel Mark Epstein calls her a neglected great poet. It would be nearer the truth to say that she was a good minor poet, sometimes powerful but too often tinkly, underrated in our day as she was overrated in her own. In an essay that is in some ways more perceptive than either of these two biographies, the literary critic Elizabeth Hardwick suggests that Millay lacked a high opinion of her own capacities, and that she was ill-

served by her early celebrity, which tempted her into a slick facility and kept her from being as impressive as she might have otherwise been. "Perhaps she was not meant to go to Greenwich Village at all," writes Hardwick, "and certainly not to become famous. . . . [N]ot nearly enough was asked of her and she had no time to prepare herself in solitude—until it was too late."

Edna Millay, it is clear, had many fine qualities: she was a hard worker, a good friend, a good citizen, and unfailingly generous to other poets and writers, especially those, like Elinor Wylie, who trod on her own lyric turf. What this poet lacked were the prosaic graces of maturity, duty, and temperance. Hers is a horrible tale, cloaked in the guise of a celebration of eros and excess—and one of the saddest stories you ever will hear.

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Enlightenment

Smiling Through the Cultural Catastrophe: Toward the Revival of Higher Education

by Jeffrey Hart

Yale. 261 pp. \$26.95

Reviewed by
Carol Iannone

SEVERAL MONTHS ago, the *New York Times* cultural correspondent Emily Eakin wrote a piece for her newspaper's education supplement describing her own fairly recent college career. Although she majored in literature at a seemingly prominent (but unnamed) university, she graduated, she tells us proudly, "without having read for credit

CAROL IANNONE, who writes on cultural and literary matters for COMMENTARY and other periodicals, contributed "At Play with Susan Sontag" to our February 2001 issue.

the *Odyssey*, *Paradise Lost*, a single play by Shakespeare, or a single novel by Jane Austen, George Eliot, or Henry James." Instead, she "was breaking new ground" by taking courses like "Feminist Literary Criticism" and "Women and the Avant-Garde," and by reading critics like Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man, novelists like Thomas Pynchon, and *Les Guérillères*, which she identifies as "a lyrical fantasy about a society without men by the French radical lesbian Monique Wittig."

This advertisement for the higher ignorance was notable mostly for its candor. Usually, proponents of current academic trends like to insist (against all evidence) that the classic works are holding their own even as newer and usually inferior titles crowd into the curriculum in response to the demands of political correctness and America's new "diversity." But the steady, decades-long assault on the cultural heritage of Western civilization has also had one interesting countereffect: a few true stalwarts of traditional education have been roused to set down, often in personal terms, their own understanding and appreciation of the culture under attack. Recent examples include Alvin Kernan's intellectual memoir, *In Plato's Cave* (1999) and Jacques Barzun's comprehensive history, *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life* (2000).

Now Jeffrey Hart has come forth with this lively and highly enjoyable sojourn through some of the greatest of the Great Books. Centered on texts that Hart first read decades ago as an undergraduate at Columbia and then taught many times over in his long career as a professor at Dartmouth, this book is ideal sustenance for anyone who, unlike the cultural correspondent of the *Times*, is wise enough to know that he does not know.

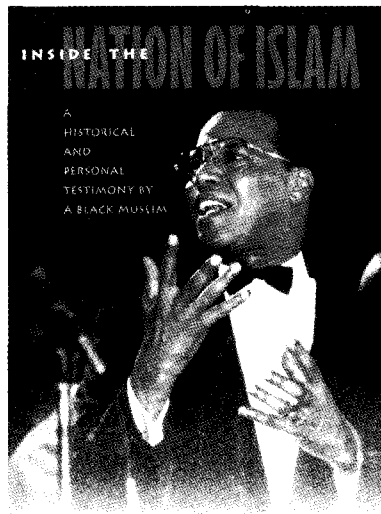
IN THE first part of the book, "The Grand Narrative," Hart traces a dichotomy that he sees at the very

base of Western culture, and that he sums up in the twin names of Athens and Jerusalem. Athens, in Hart's formulation, represents that aspiration to truth through reason which found its first sustained expression among the Greeks; Jerusalem, that aspiration to holiness through adherence to revelation which is embodied in Scripture. These two approaches, writes Hart (following

the philosopher Leo Strauss), are never to be reconciled, but also never to be divorced, for Western man knows too much to be a skeptic and too little to be an absolutist. Behind them, indeed, lies the assumption of a single truth to which each in its own way aspires. The dialectical tension between them is what has given rise, finally, to the vigorous and purposeful freedom of thought

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that has uniquely shaped our culture.

It is in line with these insights that Hart points us, for example, to the (dialectical) relation between the Homeric epics and the Bible, even going so far as to characterize the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, as a "Mosead." As the *Iliad* crystallizes in the hero Achilles the code of warrior virtues prized by the archaic Hellenic civilization, out of which emerged the Athens of the philosophers, so the story of Moses, "another Bronze Age hero," advances a code of disciplined behavior under a stringent monotheism. In time, both Socrates and Jesus would avail themselves of these ancient templates of their respective traditions, fashioning them into new standards of aspiration and conduct, disparate but also linked.

In "Explorations," the second part of his book, Hart looks at later developments of this two-headed tradition, offering spirited interpretations of Augustine, Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, Voltaire, Dostoevsky, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Throughout, he gives just enough background to help the reader situate the major figures historically, while concentrating primarily on the artistry of the books and the content of their thought.

TAKEN TOGETHER, Hart's chapters form an excellent syllabus for a one-year introduction to the Great Books. The immediacy of the classroom crackles in his often dramatic presentation—and so, too, it must be added, does the classroom teacher's occasional lapse into idiosyncrasy or mere assertion. Hart's emphasis on the interlocking qualities

of his two traditions can obscure important differences: Achilles has struck more than one reader not just as a paradigm of the heroic but as a half-mad semi-savage, whereas Moses, despite his flaws, is truly exemplary. But this just means that, like any great teacher, Hart engages us in his ideas and prompts us to articulate our own.

Above all, what Hart reminds us of is the wondrous versatility of the great works, their refusal to yield to schemes of any kind, his own included. Consider, in this connection, his analysis of *Hamlet*. To Hart, the relentlessly thoughtful Prince of Denmark embodies the expansive Renaissance tendency to entertain "various and often incompatible ways of looking at the world," a quality that in the conclusion to this book Hart terms "disinterestedness." True enough; but, in puzzling endlessly over his own motives and their possible adverse consequences were he to act upon them, the poor prince fails to *do* anything to resolve his awful dilemma. In this sense, to adopt Hart's terminology, Hamlet's internal situation may be taken as pointing to a certain paralysis caused, precisely, by the unresolved tension between Athens and Jerusalem. Hart does try to suggest possible solutions to Hamlet's plight, but might not a Hamlet less pensive, more simply-mindedly or absolutely devoted to the good of Denmark, have averted tragedy altogether?

The point is of more than literary interest. For Hart, "disinterestedness" is fundamental to Western thought ("absolutely fundamental," he says). But he is also frank enough to acknowledge that, in going "beyond [considerations of] tribe and nation, beyond personal attachment," this same disinterestedness might "conceivably be inimical to survival in a Darwinian sense."

One sees all too readily what he means. For in this sublime disinterestedness, we in our day can all too readily recognize the debilitating lineaments of relativism and



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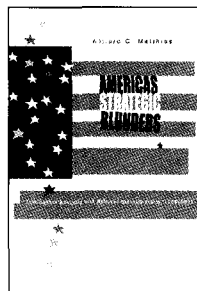
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nonjudgmentalism, doctrines that in Hart's own world of the university have permitted a takeover of the liberal arts by the anti-liberal theories of postmodernism, driving out both freedom of thought and (witness the *Times's* cultural correspondent) respect for the very tradition on which that freedom is based. The part these doctrines have played outside the confines of the university, drawing many Americans into deprecating their own way of life, and America itself into lowering its defenses, cultural and otherwise, is deeply unsettling to contemplate.

Such, at any rate, are a few of the darker thoughts, along with all the lightsome ones, to which this sprightly and engaging book gives rise.

Critical Mass

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A Twentieth-Century
Journey in Science
and Politics

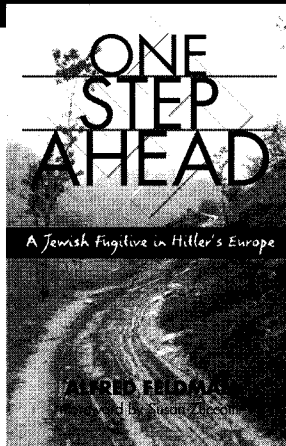
by Edward Teller
with Judith Shoolery

Perseus. 602 pp. \$35.00

Reviewed by
Dan Seligman

EDWARD TELLER, one of the 20th century's preeminent physicists, is now ninety-three, and plainly has numerous excuses for recording the events of his life. The first one you encounter here is in the glimpse he offers of a lost world: a middle-class childhood in the Austro-Hungarian empire during the years before the Great War. Another has to do with his insider's status in the intellectual revolution triggered by quantum mechanics in

DAN SELIGMAN is a contributing editor of *Forbes* and the author of *A Question of Intelligence: The IQ Debate in America*.



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Germany during the 1920's and early 1930's. Still another is his deep involvement during World War II in the making of the original atomic bomb, mainly at the Los Alamos laboratory in New Mexico.

But at the center of Teller's story—and, one has to believe, at the heart of his reason for writing it—are the controversies that have long swirled around his career *after* World War II. In particular, there is the matter of his role in pushing for the development by the United States of the hydrogen bomb—what researchers in the late 1940's called “the Super”—and the closely related episode of his 1954 testimony to Congress against his one-time boss at Los Alamos, J. Robert Oppenheimer. But if Teller's motive in writing about these matters was to clear the air, it must unfortunately be said that he has not succeeded.

A THOROUGHLY secularized Jew (religion is near-invisible in this memoir), Teller left his native Hungary in 1926 because of its virulent

anti-Semitism, and began his university education at Germany's Karlsruhe Technical Institute. He next went off to Leipzig for a post-doctoral fellowship under Werner Heisenberg, one of the two prime developers—with Niels Bohr—of quantum mechanics. (A high point in Teller's first year there was beating Heisenberg at ping-pong, which appears to have been a seriously competitive sport in the world of high-level theoretical physics.)

Not long afterward, Teller was studying with Bohr in Copenhagen. In 1932, he was invited to Rome to work with Enrico Fermi, then experimenting with nuclear fission (and concluding prematurely that it was impossible). By the mid-1930's, he was lecturing on quantum mechanics in London, where he became friendly with another Hungarian exile, Leo Szilard, who had already conceived the idea of using nuclear fission to generate extremely powerful explosions.

At age twenty-seven Teller was thus already very much a part of the relatively small group that was reshaping the world's understanding of basic physical laws. Obviously somewhat intoxicated at being in on a revolution in human thought, he seems to have been oblivious for a long time to the rise of the Nazis and its implications for all of Europe, not to mention his own future. He certainly did not foresee that he and so many of his colleagues would end up in America.

Teller first arrived in the U.S. in 1935, when he was invited to lecture at George Washington University. Inevitably, it seems, he gravitated to other academic centers that were deep into theoretical physics—Columbia, Berkeley, Chicago, Stanford—in the course of which he met J. Robert Oppenheimer, who later recruited the young physicist to join the group he had assembled to work at Los Alamos on nuclear-weapons design.

THE HEARINGS involving “Oppie,” as Teller repeatedly calls him, took

place almost a decade after the end of the war, in the spring of 1954. They were triggered by a letter to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover from William Borden, who had been staff director of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy and had dark suspicions about Oppenheimer's loyalty. The letter accurately cited numerous Communist connections in the physicist's immediate family, as well as the fact that Oppenheimer himself had gone through a long period, including the years of the Nazi-Soviet pact, in which he made regular monthly payments to the Communist party. Borden's letter linked these affiliations to the fact that after the war, Oppenheimer had been an unrelenting opponent of work on the hydrogen bomb. When Hoover got the letter, he immediately brought it to President Eisenhower, who ordered a review of Oppenheimer's security clearance.

It was true that, with the war's end, Oppenheimer had quite suddenly shifted his position on developing the Super. As early as 1942, he had seen the possibilities of a hydrogen-based fusion bomb, and ordered Los Alamos to work on it even before the fission device necessary for triggering it had been created. But after the Japanese surrender he declared that fission bombs were all the country needed, and suggested that the scientists who had created them should now return to their assorted academic posts.

Teller's testimony on these matters was clearly botched. In the book he characterizes it as “ambiguous and fumbling”—the transcript of it, published as a 33-page appendix, offers support for this view—while arguing in extenuation that he was blind-sided by last-minute developments. Even though exasperated by Oppenheimer's post-war campaign against the hydrogen bomb, Teller had shown up on the day of his testimony planning to vouch for Oppenheimer's right to a

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security clearance. But shortly before he was called as a witness, one of the prosecution lawyers showed him a transcript of Oppenheimer's own prior testimony.

It was a stunner to Teller. Oppenheimer, it turned out, had admitted that, while running Los Alamos, he had lied to security officers when asked about an "intermediary" who tried to get classified information for Soviet intelligence, and then belatedly acknowledged that the man involved was his close friend Haakon Chevalier, a professor at Berkeley and known Communist sympathizer. Asked under oath why he had kept all this secret, Oppenheimer replied, "Because I'm an idiot."

Teller, who had long considered Oppenheimer a brilliant physicist and superior manager, says he was still trying to sort out this bewildering behavior when his turn came to testify. He refused to admit the possibility that Oppenheimer was disloyal or to take seriously the numerous Communist entanglements in his personal life. He also refused to believe that there could be an ideological dimension to Oppenheimer's postwar opposition to development of the hydrogen bomb. So what should he say?

The formulation he ended up using was that Oppenheimer was not disloyal and would never intentionally harm our country. But, he added, "If it is a question of wisdom and judgment, as demonstrated by actions since 1945, then I would say one would be wiser not to grant clearance."

Gloomily reviewing the whole sequence, Teller now confesses to not saying what he had meant to say. The poor judgment he was thinking of, he writes, had to do with Oppenheimer's admitted participation in a serious security breach and his fingering of Chevalier—a friend he had long publicly defended. Yet, somehow, Teller never got around to mentioning his newfound knowledge of these

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events. Most people naturally assumed that he was really criticizing Oppenheimer for not having helped push for the hydrogen bomb, which, Teller testified, we could have had four years earlier—in 1949 instead of 1953—if there had been support for its development.

IN THE world of politically active scientists, Teller's testimony was judged an outrage—an ignominious caving-in to McCarthyism—and Teller himself became a kind of pariah. A moment of high drama in this memoir comes when he writes of a scientific conference he attended soon after the release of the transcript of his testimony. Walking over to an old colleague with whom he had once shared an apartment, he held out his hand. The colleague looked at him coldly, rejected the hand, and turned away. "I was so stunned that for a moment I couldn't react," Teller writes. "Then I realized that my life as I had known it was over."

Although he was psychologically devastated by the hostility he kept running into after the hearings, Teller's career trajectory was not visibly affected. He continued working on nuclear-weapons issues at the federal government's Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, which he had helped to found, and joined the physics faculty at the University of California-Berkeley.

He also remained actively involved in the big strategic debates, especially over two high-profile issues: nuclear test bans (which he has opposed) and ballistic missile defense (which he has supported). The two positions are logically related: Teller believes that the test bans, especially those in the atmosphere, have made it much more difficult to design effective defensive systems.

Politically, Teller comes across as an instinctive conservative, which probably means that, sooner or later, he would have been at odds with

most of his colleagues even if there had never been an Oppenheimer security case. But he does not come across as an instinctive hard-liner. To the extent that one can generalize about the countless controversies depicted in his memoir, his desire seems less to settle scores with his critics, many of whom have long since died, than to mollify them—to make them see, as it were, that he still holds most of them (including Oppenheimer) in high regard, understands their perspective on his behavior, and was himself grievously misunderstood.

One of the few colleagues who seems always to have been on Teller's side was the late John von Neumann, another Hungarian refugee, still occasionally identified as the smartest man who ever lived. Both Teller and von Neumann were all-out for proceeding with the hydrogen bomb, and feared a world in which Stalin had it and we did not. This was a distinctly unpopular position at a time when most other scientists were (a) feeling guilty about the use against Japan of the nuclear weapons they had created and (b) telling themselves that it was still possible to reach agreement with the Soviets on outlawing the hydrogen bomb. Skeptical about any such possibility, Teller says he became a serious anti-Communist while at Los Alamos, mainly as a result of reading the work of yet another Hungarian refugee, Arthur Koestler.

WHEN A man in his nineties writes a memoir "with" somebody, the standard assumption is that the other person is a ghostwriter. My own guess about this book, based on numerous clues throughout the text, is that Teller pretty much wrote it, apparently over many years, and that Judith Shoolery (a veteran book editor at the Hoover Institution, where Teller for many years has been a senior research scholar) helped him smooth out some rough edges.

In any case, the book is a terrific

read. Its up-close portraits of the scientific luminaries who created nuclear weapons ring true, and at times Teller displays an almost journalistic eye for the memorable detail. One also finds that he is a more rounded and interesting human being than his highly focused career and characteristically stern visage would suggest. He has been a super-doting father and husband (his wife of 66 years died in 2000). In periods of high emotion, he has often turned to the writing of poetry (Hungarian or otherwise) to express himself. He is a gifted pianist. Also a relentless poker player. And he seems addicted to puns and jokes, a sizable sample of which appear in the footnotes.

Still, as far as substance goes, Teller's confession about Oppenheimer presents some maddening problems for his admirers, including this one. The main question is how, a half-century later, he can continue to dismiss out of hand the possibility that Oppenheimer's behavior—including his campaign against our developing the hydrogen bomb—may have arisen out of his Communist sympathies. How could Teller, a man professing to have been profoundly affected by Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, write in connection with Oppenheimer that "being a Communist in the 1920's and 1930's . . . reflected little more than a strong streak of idealism"? For that matter, how can he ignore the details set forth last year in *The Venona Secrets*, by Herbert Romerstein and Eric Breindel, about Oppenheimer's contacts during the war with known Soviet agents?

The answer, one assumes, is that, despite everything, Teller retains some residual feeling for his old boss. More important, he may still want to extend a hand to those who have been demonizing him all these years. But it will not work. As others who have tried to explain or explain away their honorable service in the cause of anti-Communism have discovered, the other side, even at this late date, is not listening.

Rick Geddes is an
associate professor of
economics at Fordham
University and a research
fellow at the Hoover
Institution.

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A widespread view in American academia today condemns antipathy directed at individuals because of their membership in particular groups but praises hostility to other disfavored groups. **Group aversion directed at a particular race is, for example, quite correctly denounced, yet hostility toward the economically affluent continues to be lauded.** An assessment of group hatred based on race versus class, however, suggests that the two are remarkably similar. Both rely on the identification and classification of people by categories. Both condemn a person not for any crime perpetrated by an individual but for his or her group identity. Both promote an "us versus them" mentality. Both have been manipulated by the state to extend its power. And both have been used to justify appalling violence against the disfavored group, resulting in humanity's worst genocides.

R. J. Rummel, a political science professor at the University of Hawaii, assembled the world's most extensive set of statistics on government-sponsored genocide. His data indicate that totalitarian regimes, relying on Marxist class-based hatred, were among the most murderous known to humanity. Stalin, for example, murdered approximately 55 million of his fellow citizens, while the Communist Chinese murdered about 35 million. Rummel's tally for Nazi Germany is 21 million. Consistent with Rummel's data, the *Black Book of Communism* states that at least 100 million people were murdered by communist regimes. Indeed, racial and class hatred were often effectively

used together as political tools. Witness Hitler's attacks on "wealthy Jews."

Although genocide, in some cases, was undoubtedly motivated by a combination of racial and class hatred, that is certainly less true of the Communist Chinese. Moreover, Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, motivated purely by class-based hatred, instigated genocide unparalleled in human history, when measured as a percentage of the population. The Khmer Rouge used novel indicators of class, such as wearing of eyeglasses, to identify its victims.

Class hatred may, in some ways, be even more pernicious than racial hatred. The damage from racism is limited by the availability of victims in that group. With classism, however, the group targeted for persecution can easily be redefined according to political necessity, as was frequently done by Stalin and Mao. Moreover, hatred based on relative affluence provides an immediate justification for the state to confiscate property, thus enhancing its appeal.

If the notion of hate speech is to place constraints on the language used in public discussion, it must certainly apply to hatred based on class as well. Yet even with such a monstrous history, it is unlikely that classism will soon take its place alongside racism as an instrument of evil. It retains a patina of legitimacy since it is consistent with the views of many American academics. The fact that it continues to be used as a political tool without outcry from intellectuals is a sad commentary on our distorted state of historical understanding.

— Rick Geddes

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Carleen Hawn, Associate Editor

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